Executive Summary of the Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District

The Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District is an urban design and economic development road map for revitalization. The purpose of the Master Plan is to offer a creative, tangible approach to stimulate cultural activity for the Main Street neighborhood in the District. The Plan is also intended to provide a home for artists and provide for the cultural needs of the city’s residents as well as serve as a catalyst for the economic redevelopment of the Main South neighborhood and the city as a whole. The recommendations presented in this Executive Summary are the result of extensive community outreach, involvement, and analysis. Representing a true spirit of partnership, the Arts District Task Force, ARTSWorcester, and the City of Worcester worked closely together to sponsor this work, and they selected Community Partners Consultants, Inc. to complete this Arts District Master Plan.

The intent of the Arts District presented in this report is to create a vibrant, enticing, and engaging place to live, work, and visit. The Arts District will be home to artists and others working in creative endeavors, revitalize the existing historic structures and other underutilized buildings in the neighborhood. The District will become a regional draw for people wanting to rediscover their heritage in the Discover! Worcester Trail, buy unique handcrafted items for home renovation at “Art At Home” or view an exhibition at a Center for Contemporary Art in the renovated brick manufacturing buildings along Beacon Street, enjoy a meal at an ethnic restaurant or listen to music at a café along Main Street, or appreciate the public art and landscaping at one of the major gateways to the district.

Master Plan Recommendations

• Expand Arts District boundaries to include historic buildings in the Junction Shop Manufacturing District. Extend District along Main Street to Federal Square
• Develop the District with three zones of emphasis
• Create “Art at Home” concept in historic manufacturing buildings
• Pursue public art opportunities throughout the District. Hold art and public design competitions for special “gateway” locations
• Improved streetscapes and street furniture to be approached as public art opportunities
• Create Discover! Worcester Trail
• Coordinated arts and cultural event programming
• Coordinated business development technical assistance
• “Tools for Implementation” - Creation of public/private partnership to implement Master Plan recommendations

What does an Arts District do?

• Ensures affordable housing for artists and other residents
• Tailors zoning to suit artist-related needs and allows artist live/work spaces
• Puts existing vacant properties back on the tax rolls
• Creates a strong image for artists, other district businesses, and area colleges

What does an Arts District NOT do?

• Dictate where artists must live or work
• Limit benefits to only those artists living or working in the District
• Force out existing businesses or residents
• Stifle cultural events and activities planned for other parts of the city
• Create a “cookie cutter” approach to neighborhood revitalization
• Offer an instant success story… but it will support incremental change over time.
District Boundary Map with Recommended Expansion Areas

**Expand district boundaries**

**Junction Shop Manufacturing District:**
- Adds over 537,000 square feet of historic, high-ceiling, large floor building space
- Striking image of area
- Historic significance to the city
- Low acquisition costs
- Good visibility from new Route 146/Southbridge Street gateway

**Federal Square**
- Provides a strong connection with downtown
- Future restoration of 2500-seat theater will provide a strong anchor for the District
- Retain Madison Street as secondary gateway

**District Concept**

The map on the facing page illustrates the broad concept for the Master Plan. The expanded Arts District offers three very distinct zones: Downtown Gateway, Family/Education/Culture, and Dining/Entertainment/Retail, illustrated on the adjacent map. These zones are not meant to be boundaries within the District but rather areas of emphasis; all uses will be encouraged throughout the District. However, the building types, sizes, and locations dictate use to a large degree, and as such, some areas of the District are more suited than others for particular types of activity.
Areas of Emphasis within the Arts District

LEGEND

- **Major Destination Zones**
- **District Gateway**
- **Access**

- **Family/Education/Culture**
- **Downtown Gateway**
- **Art at Home**
- **Dining/Entertainment/Retail**
Executive Summary of the Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District

Downtown Gateway

- Buildings are similar in scale and style to central business district
- Higher acquisition costs make the buildings likely candidates for market-rate housing and commercial uses
- Build solid gateway image for District

Family, Education, Culture

- Core of destinations including current YMCA, School Department Parent Information Center, Magnet School
- Future core of this area to expand to accommodate large cultural/educational anchors such as Art Museum Annex and Center for Crafts
- Concentration of artist live/work space and other housing opportunities in this area

Art at Home

- Up to 100,000 square feet of retail space within the historic manufacturing district
- Regional destination for home improvement specialty items created by artists and craftspeople
- Antique stores and small-scale furniture makers located here
- Attracts visitors with disposable income – a necessary ingredient for a successful arts district

Dining, Entertainment, Retail

- Smaller scale buildings
- Storefronts

- Proximity to Clark University
- Entertainment destinations such as Gilrein’s
- Eclectic mix of shops, restaurants, and galleries

Celebrate the Gateways

The four gateways to the Arts District can be strong markers to visitors and symbols for the health and vitality of the city. Each gateway has its own character and presents unique opportunities for creative design and public art opportunities.

Discover! Worcester Trail

The Arts District’s success will depend, in part, on the District’s reflection of the character of the City, and its ability to make connections to the rest of Worcester. With these goals in mind, a trail is proposed for the District that connects the area to the city and serves as a destination and activity for visitors and residents. The trail is envisioned as a network of markers that highlight sites and events having cultural, architectural, and historical or other special significance. This trail should be a citywide endeavor, with sites throughout Worcester, and with a broad array of individuals, organizations, institutions, and businesses contributing to its conception and implementation.

The first markers would be installed within the District and artists would be heavily involved in the design of the markers and of the supporting informational and promotional materials. Special events would celebrate the installation of each marker.

Some potential Sites for a Discover! Worcester Trail in and adjacent to the District are shown and annotated on the map on the facing page.
Discover! Worcester Trail in the Arts District
Executive Summary of the Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District

Opportunities for Public Art/Landscaping

LEGEND

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (Trees, Plantings, Street furniture)

SPECIFIC PUBLIC ART/LANDSCAPING OPPORTUNITIES

SURFACE PARKING SCREENING

FAÇADE AND MINOR BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

DISTRICT GATEWAY

6 Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District
Opportunities for Public Art/Landscaping

Extensive opportunities for public art abound within the District. Artists, architects, and landscape architects can apply an integrated approach to design and art to enable public art and design to become intrinsically woven within the urban context of the District. These opportunities support the element of discovery and serendipity the District will exhibit. In addition, the high visibility of art and culture in the District, and its contribution to the city’s attraction as a destination, will increase opportunities for public art throughout the city. Within this approach, five specific areas offer opportunities for public art:

- Streetscape improvements
- Specific public art/landscaping opportunities
- Surface parking screening
- Facade and minor building improvements
- District gateways

Potential Uses and Activities in the Arts District

Buildings throughout the District have been evaluated for development potential and possible project opportunities. The map on Possibilities for Building Reuse on the next page highlights buildings with project or development potential. This evaluation of possible projects and development is a suggested framework. The extensive space in the Junction Shop Manufacturing District will take years to complete. The large building size and space configuration, however, will enable great flexibility in assignment of uses.

The buildings highlighted total approximately 820,000 square feet. The Master Plan allocates uses to these buildings in the following way:

- Artist live/work: 70 units
- Market Rate Housing: 200 units
- Mixed-income housing: 135 units
- Art at Home: 100,000 sf
- Contemporary Art Center: 50,000 sf
- Schools: 25,000 sf
- General Commercial: 46,000 sf
- Retail/Restaurant: 60,000 sf
- Parks/Green Space
- Street Vendors
- Festivals/Pedestrian Days

In addition to existing commercial, retail, and restaurants.
Possibilities for Building Reuse
Zoning in the Arts Overlay District

The Arts District Overlay Zone, adopted by City Council in November 1999, provides for certain new provisions within the Worcester Zoning Ordinance that include artist live/work space, gallery and exhibit space, and performance and rehearsal space in a new use designated as “Commercial Artist Lofts.” The amendment also allows all uses permitted in the former underlying zone, including manufacturing, business and residential uses.

While the new overlay ensures that artists and arts-related uses can exist in the District, the retained requirements of minimum parking and other restrictions allow development that would not support the urban quality of the District. To support the vision for the District, changes are recommended to:

- **Parking requirements:** Set maximums, restrict parking to rear of lots along Main Street, allow art installations within parking buffer zones, restrict curb cuts along Main Street.
- **Dimensional requirements:** New buildings built at street edge, waive minimum building frontage.
- **Signs:** Restrict internally illuminated plastic signs and fluorescent lamps, encourage unique signage, regulate dimensions.
- **Uses:** Allow street vendors, street musicians, regularly scheduled street closings (pedestrian days), and kiosks.

The goals for the District include the desire for:

- Places for artist/public interaction: coffee shops, galleries, and performance spaces.
- Multiple choices and a diversity of uses to foster a rich creative environment.
- A safe environment.
- Affordable artist live/work space.
- Ownership opportunities for artists.
- Good opportunities to exhibit work.
- Accessible transportation and parking for visitors.
- Strong recognition of the District; very visible positive image.
- Organization of events and places, one central place where you can get all info you need.
- Good social environment for artist interaction with their peers.
- Diversity and multiplicity of choices and uses.
- Unique experience for residents and visitors.
Executive Summary of the Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District

Economic Impact

As the Master Plan moves forward, the implementing entity must focus on the economic effects and long-term sustainability of specific recommendations contained in the Master Plan. As this economic analysis illustrates, the potential exists to create a range of economic benefits—not only for revitalizing the district and its surrounding Main South neighborhood—but also for the City’s overall economic growth:

- Reduces the amount of vacant space
- Generates property taxes
- Increases sales tax receipts
- Creates new jobs
- Improves the physical environment
- Strengthens the quality of life
- Serves as a destination & attraction
- Enhances the number of cultural tourism visitors

What the Numbers say

- 800,000+ square feet of development opportunities
- Importance of identifying anchors and creating critical mass
- 15 - 20 year implementation period
- $35 - $40 million investment in new housing
- 600 new residents generate $24 million in new income
- $16+ million in new commercial investment
- 1000 jobs generate $2 million in annual retail spending
- Detailed feasibility testing required

The Plan into Action

This Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District presents a variety of recommendations on physical design improvements, cultural and economic development opportunities, and an overall urban design vision for the district. Putting this Arts District Master Plan into action will require:

- Create public/private partnership entity responsible as the catalyst for implementing Master Plan recommendations
- Must include involvement of the city, educational, arts, business, and non-profit organizations in Worcester
- Leadership and commitment by participating organizations and agencies are key for success
- Commit and secure financial incentives and resources

Who’s Responsible?

- Arts District Task Force, ARTSWorcester, and City took the initial lead, but others need to participate
- Management entity representing a public/private partnership is essential
- Main South CDC and partners could provide initial development leadership
- City can contribute expertise and resources in a partnership with other groups
- Wisely use organizational and agency resources to avoid re-inventing the wheel and to move quickly

Who Pays?

- No one group can do it alone
- Private sector development
- City support for public improvements and related development, as feasible
- Foundations
- State and federal programs, as possible
- Extensive list of potential funding sources part of Master Plan implementation report
- Critical to target public incentives and improvements wisely – to encourage the most private sector investment possible

The Future

- The Arts District as a destination
- Celebration of the arts and culture
- An economic stimulus for the city
- A vibrant, active, welcoming place
- Renewed confidence in Worcester
- A transformed neighborhood…

For more information, please contact:
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Chapter One: Overview

Generated from a true spirit of partnership among the City of Worcester, ARTSWorcester, and the Arts District Task Force, this Master Plan for Worcester’s Arts District is intended to develop a creative revitalization plan and economic development strategy for the Main South neighborhood. The Arts District is located in the ten-block stretch of Main Street located between Madison and Hammond Streets between Worcester’s central business district and Clark University.

Arts District Task Force

The concept of an Arts District in Worcester first surfaced five years ago when ARTSWorcester, an advocacy organization supporting contemporary artists in the city, hosted a City Council Candidates Forum on the Arts. The critical need to create a community of artists where ideas could be shared and where artist living space, studios, galleries, and performance spaces could be located was addressed.

Following the Forum on the Arts, city officials recognized that an arts district could assist artists while supporting economic development and an improved quality of life in the city. In 1999, the City Council adopted an Arts District Zone Overlay for part of the Main South area of the city.

“The Arts District should be an enhancement, not a replacement. It should complement existing businesses, not compete. It should build on and contribute to their success.”

- T&G 3/27/02

The Arts District links downtown to the Clark University Campus along Main Street.
Base Orthophoto Source: City of Worcester
The following year, the City of Worcester established the Arts District Task Force to serve as an advisory group to the City Manager to advise and guide efforts to shape the Arts District. The Task Force is comprised of 21 members representing a broad array of community partners and diverse perspectives including people working in the arts, cultural organizations, education, real estate, business, local government, community foundation, and neighborhood advocacy.

The Mission of the Arts District Task Force is summarized below:

“To create a vibrant mixed community of artists of all disciplines, students, residents, cultural organizations, and businesses by fostering sustainable creative, cultural, and economic revitalization while supporting the history, heritage, and multicultural nature of the existing neighborhood, and to create a strong cultural identity for the Arts District within the geographic framework provided by the Arts District Zone Overlay.”

Creating the Arts District Master Plan

The Arts District Task Force selected Community Partners Consultants, Inc. to develop a Master Plan for Worcester’s Arts District. Community Partners is a consulting firm specializing in community economic development, strategic planning, neighborhood revitalization, design and the arts. The Community Partners Team worked with the Arts District Task Force and community members to complete a comprehensive assessment of the Arts District and develop the Master Plan.

The Master Plan for the Arts District is a roadmap for redevelopment and revitalization. The purpose of the Master Plan is to provide a home for artists and provide for the cultural needs of the city’s residents as well as serve as a catalyst for the economic redevelopment of the neighborhood and the city. The plan encompasses the following tasks as listed in the Request for Proposals for the Master Plan:

- Identify a range of reuses for vacant or underutilized buildings that maximize each building’s potential in contributing to the Arts District
- Identify opportunities for affordable artist live/work space, mixed-income housing, cultural activities, businesses, and educational activities in the District
- Present ideas for potential open space and/or parks
- Suggest opportunities for public art, streetscape improvements, and signage throughout the District
- Identify gateways and transitions for streets leading to the Arts District
- Provide representative sketches of suggested façade improvements
- Create a Master Plan framework that encourages a dialogue between real estate owners and managers, developers, artists, colleges, business owners, cultural organizations, financial institutions, and the City to encourage the sale, purchase and/or rehabilitation of vacant or underutilized buildings in the Arts District
- Encourage a strong, diverse base of support for cultural economic development among community, political, educational, and business leaders
- Identify implementation strategies and possible funding sources for the Master Plan

The Master Plan for the Arts District is the culmination of analysis, planning, and community involvement and reflects the needs and desires of the diverse constituencies that will be affected. The planning process incorporated extensive community involvement, citizen participation, qualitative and quantitative research and analysis of economic and physical redevelopment strategies. The Scope of Work included:

- Data Collection and Review - included extensive interviews and focus group meetings with leaders and activists in economic development and real estate, the arts, non-profit institutions and organizations, and the community
- Property Inventory and Evaluation - included a detailed recording of streetscape con-
ditions, building conditions, building sizes, ownership of parcels, existing businesses, and information on parking, landmarks and vacancies.

- **Project Area Analysis and Assessment** - included assessment of the project area and the creation of a vision for the Arts District build on the assets and opportunities inherent to the district’s unique character

- **Economic Analysis and Strategies** - included evaluation of the demographics of the area, sales potential, cost of property development and an estimation of potential benefits to determine opportunities for economic development and property development

- **Community Participation** - included three community-wide meetings with opportunities for small break-out groups for more active engagement and discussion of the issues, countless individual interviews, and several focus group meetings

- **Preparation of the Master Plan** based on all of the steps listed above

Accompanying this Master Plan is a technical document submitted separately entitled *Tools for Implementation*. This document contains detailed information on potential funding sources, the economic and financial analysis, building data, selected case examples, and other related information necessary for implementation of the Master Plan.

**What is an Arts District?**

The Request for Proposals for consultants to complete the Master Plan describes the Arts District well:

_The Arts District is a public/private partnership project intended to revitalize this disinvested area of the City by promoting the reuse of several underutilized and vacant properties that would be suitable for affordable housing, artist live-work space, performance venues, galleries, and other creative commercial and retail enterprises. The successful development of the Arts District and the creation of a major destination point for the region is one of the City’s seven highest economic development priorities and is also one of the four major goals of Worcester’s cultural community. Worcester boasts 40 cultural institutions, several of international stature, and hundreds of artists and arts faculty at the City’s 11 colleges, providing a strong foundation for the Arts District._

Arts Districts typically combine zoning changes, public incentives, and marketing efforts to create a concentration of arts and culture-related activities and uses and to draw visitors to the District. These specially designated districts foster economic development, attract regional visitors, and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community.

**Zoning changes** address challenges faced by artists who work and live in the same location but are legally prohibited from doing so by zoning regulations where residential and commercial or industrial zones traditionally are segregated. Arts District zoning typically allows artist live/work uses, other residential uses, and industrial and commercial uses to occur in the same area. Metal welding, kiln work, and glass blowing are all allowable uses within an arts district that also allow residential and commercial uses. Zoning changes seek to encourage the diversity of uses and flexibility of spaces that make a district affordable for artists and a compelling destination for visitors and residents.

Along with zoning changes, municipalities often foster inter-departmental cooperation to streamline permitting and code compliance reviews and inspections to offer incentives for development and to eliminate unknown factors in the purchase and renovation process for professional developers and for artists seeking their own live/work space.

**Public incentives** in the form of guaranteed loans, tax breaks, and public infrastructure improvements serve to offer testament to the city’s commitment to an arts district and pave the way for private investment in an area. Incentives can take many forms such as fiscal policies, physical streetscape and utility improvements, and coordinated city marketing efforts to attract and retain artists and other businesses, thus creating a regional destination for visitors.
What the Arts District can do:

- Ensure affordable housing for artists and other residents
- Put existing vacant properties back on the tax rolls
- Beautify and restore an area of current disinvestment
- Create a critical mass of people
- Tailor zoning to suit artist-related needs
- Create a strong marketing image for artists and other district businesses.
- Provide benefits to retailers through increased event programming, pedestrian traffic, and enhanced image of the area
- Benefit educational institutions and businesses by enticing new students and employees due to increased quality of life in Worcester

What the Arts District can’t or won’t do:

- Dictate where artists must live or work
- Limit benefits to only those artists living or working in the District
- Force out existing businesses or residents
- Stifle cultural events and activities planned for other parts of the city
- Create a “cookie cutter” approach to neighborhood revitalization
- Offer an instant success story but will support incremental change over time

Since designation of the Arts District in Worcester, steady progress has been made in the revitalization of the six-tenth of a mile length of the District. ARTSWorcester moved its offices into the Aurora Building at 660 Main Street and Santiago’s new 25,000 sf supermarket and 27,000 sf “cash and carry” opened in the former Mart building on Main Street. This project alone brought $2 million worth of investment and at least 50 new jobs into the neighborhood while transforming a building that was empty for nearly 25 years. At about this same time, a non-profit organization opened ARTichoke, an organic food co-op and retail store/art gallery at 800 Main Street. In addition, the non-profit Community Builders purchased the historic Odd Fellows building to build 24 units of mixed-income loft housing and two floors of commercial space. The City will lease the ground floor to house its Home Center and the lower level of the building will potentially house incubator space for arts-related businesses.

Artists have begun to make a visual impact in the District. In the spring of 2002, 15 trashcans were unveiled. Donated by the City Department of Public Works, painted by local artists, and adopted by businesses, the trashcans are a colorful addition to Main Street and a vibrant symbol of artists’ creativity in the District. The City has also continued its support of the District. In May 2002, the District was designated a “zero-tolerance zone.” The designation allowed an intensive effort on the part of the City Police Department, Department of Public Health, Code Division, and Department of Public Works to address issues of crime, code compliance, and cleanliness and street landscaping. These early wins in the District reveal the cooperation and commitment from the community necessary to support the success of the Arts District.

In summary, a successful Arts District raises the level of awareness and potential of a city as a place of arts and creativity. This enhanced image contributes to a city’s image as a desirable place to live, work, and visit. This Arts District Master Plan articulates the steps necessary to accomplish that goal in Worcester.

Why focus on the Arts?

Worcester’s artist community is significant with nationally-recognized artists, organizations, and educational institutions. In addition to serving as a strong creative and intellectual force for the region, the community also offers tangible economic benefit. A recent study of the economic impacts of the arts, sponsored by the New England Council in 2001, quantifies the impact of culture and the arts on the regional economy:

What we found startled even those who have long supported the notion that New England’s rich cultural assets constitute a powerful economic force. In a report released one year ago, we
The successful trashcan project, sponsored by ARTSWorcester, has allowed artists to make their mark on the District. Artists: Eric L’Ecuyer (left) and Susan Champeny; Art XII Group (right)

expanded analysis of the sector to include nonprofit cultural organizations as well as commercial enterprises and individual artists. We found that 245,000 New Englanders, or 3.5% of the region’s total workforce, are employed in what we call the “creative economy.” Moreover, the occupations that comprise this sector are growing at a faster rate than other occupations in the general economy. We also found that the creative economy is responsible for generating annually $6.6 billion in tourism revenue alone.

-A Blueprint for Investment in New England’s Creative Economy, June 2001

The non-profit arts industry is big business: According to the National Governors Association (June 2001),

- Non-profit arts generated $36.8 billion in economic impacts and 1.3 million full-time jobs across the U.S.
- Performing arts activities outdraw sporting events & movies combined
- Of 200 million travelers across the U.S., 22% visited a museum, 15% attended a concert and 13% attended live theater
- Travelers interested in culture & the arts spend more than other travelers ($615 vs. $425 per person per trip), take longer trips, include multiple destinations & are more likely to stay in hotels

The bottom line? In addition to supporting local non-profits and residents involved in arts and culture, Worcester’s support of the Arts District is wise economic investment.
Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District
Chapter Two: The Arts District Today

The Worcester Arts District, located southwest of the downtown core, encompasses the 10-block stretch of Main Street between Madison and Hammond Streets. The District is home to sixty buildings that once comprised what has been described as the “urban jewel” of the city. These buildings vary in physical condition, architectural character and cultural significance. Eight of these structures have been designated historic buildings, and this abundance of architectural gems in a relatively small area reflects the former health and vitality of this portion of Main Street, a part of the city that has fallen on hard times. Vacant lots, boarded-up buildings, and empty storefronts are visible signs of disinvestment and blight in the area.

Despite these changes, the special character of Main Street has not gone unnoticed. Residents appreciate the unique character of the buildings, the ethnic restaurants and businesses along Main Street, and the services offered by community organizations in the area such as the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club of Worcester, Centro Las Americas, and churches. Recent efforts by the private development community, non-profit organizations, and the City of Worcester are beginning to bear fruit in the revitalization of the area. The designation of the Arts District in 1999, the location of ARTSWorcester in the restored Aurora Building, and the pending restoration of the
Chapter Two: The Arts District Today

Odd Fellows Building are all indicators that the area is beginning to enjoy a renaissance.

This analysis of the District looks at the buildings, urban context, and physical connections in the area to identify opportunities and challenges for continued revitalization and development of the District. This evaluation of the Arts District and surrounding areas encompasses the following:

- District character and urban design
- Historic and significant buildings
- Vacant buildings and lots
- Street activity and public safety
- Access and visibility

District Character and Urban Design

A number of buildings along the corridor are noted for their architectural character and positive contribution to quality of life. Local businesses occupy many storefronts and there is a healthy level of pedestrian activity. At the same time, the urban environment in the District exhibits many of the characteristics of a blighted neighborhood. In some areas vacant lots, unoccupied buildings, presence of illegal drugs and street crime, and a concern about safety are disincentives for investment.

This analysis of the urban design characteristics of the District emphasizes aspects of the physical environment that affect quality of life, development and revitalization potential, and image of the area. The analysis map includes notes on:

- Interruptions in building/activity edge
- Pedestrian barriers
- Open/green space
- Gateways
- Destinations

Interruptions in Building/Activity Edge

At some points along Main Street, such as the block between Oread and Benefit Streets on the south side of Main, more than 50% of a block length is devoted to vacant lots or parking. This disruption in the building edge erodes the vitality of the street. Lack of building activity, commercial activities, and visual interest at these street edge interruptions discourages pedestrian activity along the length of the District and creates incentives for loitering and trash dumping. Looking at both sides of Main Street within the District, the vacant lots, parking lots, and vacant buildings account for 50% of the total street length. These are conditions that cannot support a vibrant, healthy commercial and social environment.

Pedestrian Barriers

Madison Street acts as a barrier between downtown and the Arts District. The width of the roadway, change in character of Main Street at this point, and shift in the types of building uses serve to create negative public perception and discourage the crossing of Madison Street.

Subtle and gradual changes in the urban character can also act as pedestrian barriers. The gradual change along Main Street from the area surrounding Clark University to the Hammond Street gateway to the District sends signals to the pedestrian that the walkable, safe, urban zone ends. Narrow sidewalks, large gaps in the building edge, and changes in the general repair and maintenance of buildings on Main Street give clues to the pedestrian that the friendly territory is coming to an end as one approaches the Arts District.
Urban Design Analysis Map of the District and Surrounding Areas
Chapter Two: The Arts District Today

Open/Green Space

Almost no green space exists on Main Street. Street trees have been planted but many have not been pruned or maintained, and grassy areas along the sidewalk are non-existent. In most cases, there are no planting strips between parking lots and the sidewalk. With no landscaped areas, the flow of asphalt parking lots to concrete sidewalks to curb to asphalt street surface presents a “hard-edged” environment for pedestrians. Off Main Street, the story is different. Oread Park and the community gardens on Castle Street offer respite from the commercial strip of Main Street, as do the parks at the public housing on Murray Avenue.

Gateways

The Madison Street gateway offers the potential to connect the District to downtown but is fraught with challenges. Currently, a left turn prohibition from Madison to Main Street limits the role of this intersection as a gateway for travelers arriving from I-290 and points south. There is also a right turn prohibition from Main onto Madison Street going south. These turning prohibitions reduce Madison Street’s role as a gateway and increase the use of both Beacon Street and Murray Avenue as District entry points. At the western end of the District, the urban character of Main Street erodes. The entrance to the District is not welcoming with a vacant lot at the corner of Hammond and Main Streets, the Funeral Home parking lot, and a Dunkin Donuts serving as the gateway to the Arts District.

Destinations

Destinations are defined as sites or buildings that attract a large number of people from outside the District. As the Arts District develops, the creation of destinations will be an important factor in increasing street activity, providing a market for artists, galleries and cultural events, and supporting the density of arts-related uses necessary to ensure the success of the District. Current destinations in and adjacent to the District include:

- **Aurora Building** at 660 Main Street (ARTSWorcester)
- **The Boys and Girls Club** at Two Ionic Ave.
- **The Masonic Temple** at One Ionic Ave.
- **YMCA** at 766 Main Street
- **City School Department Parent Information Center** at 768 Main Street
- **Jacob Hiatt Magnet School** at 772 Main Street
- **Gilrein’s Blues Club** (currently closed) at 802 Main Street
- **Sunbridge Rehabilitation Center** at 835 Main Street
- **Worcester Sanitary Plumbing Museum** at 39 Piedmont Street
- **Registry of Motor Vehicles** at 611 Main Street
- **Santiago’s Market** at 674 Main Street
- **Baptist Church** at 717 Main Street

“Create a strong image of Worcester as a cultural city; market to artists and patrons alike.”

- Focus Group Participant

While Madison Street at Main Street could be the gateway to the District for visitors, the left turn prohibition from Main onto Madison puts drivers onto Beacon Street—a uninviting gateway for the District.

While Madison Street at Main Street could be the gateway to the District for visitors, the left turn prohibition from Main onto Madison puts drivers onto Beacon Street—a uninviting gateway for the District.

This intersection at Southbridge and Jackson Streets will become an important new gateway to the District when Route 146 improvements are completed.
Chapter Two: The Arts District Today

Physical Environment

The physical environment along Main Street in the Arts District is neither attractive nor pedestrian friendly due to graffiti, storefronts in need of maintenance, poorly designed store signs, and trash-strewn sidewalks. Street plantings aren’t maintained and the lack of green space between parking lots and the sidewalks along Main Street add to an overwhelming feeling of an asphalt-covered, hard-edged urban area that is not welcoming to visitors.

Many of the businesses on Main Street, however, are critical to the local residents and contribute greatly to the character and diversity of the District. Ethnic shops, “mom & pop” stores, professional offices, and other commercial enterprises could benefit greatly from better signage, a street maintenance program, and a targeted program to keep the District free from litter.

Comments on the District from participants at master plan focus groups and public meetings:

- The Arts District is very linear and needs to extend more into the surrounding areas to incorporate significant buildings just outside the existing boundary.
- We will need to build a depth of housing, work and gallery spaces that don’t appear available right now on Main Street.
- The Master Plan must begin to shift negative perceptions about the District.
- The Worcester market is thin. Where will the people come from? Demand for the area must be created through a regional approach.
- It is critical to get some early wins for artist live/work space right away!
- Create a safe environment in the District. A greater police presence is needed and the City must provide ongoing street cleaning and more trashcans.
- Address safety issues with the PIP Shelter.
- No street vendors are allowed in the District; this prohibition must be changed to allow for food vendors, small kiosks, and snack carts.
- This is a college town with no place for the students to go. This District can provide a destination for students as well as families and regional visitors.
- Vacant lots are an eyesore and create unsafe physical conditions. Lots should be fenced and secured to deter loitering, illegal activities, and trash dumping.
- Buildings of historical and cultural significance aren’t being celebrated.
- The District can be a positive image for the entire city.
- The District feels separate from the rest of the city and it must be reconnected.

The American Sanitary Plumbing Museum is operated by Charles Manoog, Inc. on Piedmont Street. This museum can contribute to the eclecticism and serendipity of the Arts District.

The YMCA on Main Street is an important amenity to the neighborhood and the city. This destination helps anchor the district and supports a positive image.

Empty lots, trash-strewn sidewalks and abandoned shopping carts are signs of disinvestment in the area. These conditions cause unease in pedestrians and discourage commercial and residential investment.
Chapter Two: The Arts District Today

Historic and Significant Buildings

The District is dotted with historic and significant sites and the accompanying artistic and architectural details that add character and richness to Main Street. In many cases, these buildings are currently occupied and well maintained. In others, renovation is planned or needed.

Historic Buildings

This list of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places within the District Zone Overlay and adjacent neighborhoods is derived from the publication “Worcester’s Best” 2nd Edition 1996, prepared by Preservation Worcester. The numbers correspond to the building locations on the map.

1. The Aurora Hotel, 652-660 Main St., 1887 - ARTSWorcester and Residential
2. The I.O.O.F. Building, 674 Main St., 1844 - Affordable/artist housing and City Home Center with Arts-related business. Incubator space on the lower level (planned). Currently vacant.
3. Main Street Baptist Church, 717 Main St., 1853/1855 - Religious
4. Boynton & Windsor Apartments, 718 and 720 Main St., 1887 - Residential
5. The Castle Row District, 4-18 Castle St., 1870's - Residential
6. Moody Shattuck House, 768 Main St., 1885 - Headstart Program
7. Dowley-Taylor Mansion, 770 Main St., 1842 - City of Worcester School Department Offices
8. Lucius Knowles House, 838 Main St., 1870 - Funeral Home
9. Brightstyle Apartments, 2 King St., 1889 - Affordable/artist housing and City Home Center with Arts-related business. Incubator space on the lower level (planned). Currently vacant.
10. Charles H. Fitch House, 15 Oread St., 1878 - Residential
11. Edward Stark House, 21 Oread St., 1880's - Residential
13. Masonic Temple, Two Ionic Ave., 1911 - Masonic Lodge
14. The Worcester Market, 631 Main St., 1914 - Government

Significant Buildings

In addition to the officially designated historic buildings in the District, a number of additional buildings have significance due to their large size, location, or cultural history. These buildings have been evaluated considering their potential reuse and contributions to the District. The letters refer to locations on the map and the total size and footprint are shown in square feet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Name</th>
<th>Total Size</th>
<th>Footprint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Burwick, 653 Main St.</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Caravan, 661 Main St.</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Odd Fellows, 674 Main St.</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D PIP Shelter, 701 Main St.</td>
<td>69,255</td>
<td>13,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Boys/Girls Club, Ionic Ave</td>
<td>38,922</td>
<td>11,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Jackson Apts, 767 Main St.</td>
<td>54,300</td>
<td>9,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Large-Floor Area Buildings are structures that have over 20,000 square feet of space. In addition, some of these buildings have a large building footprint. The footprint is the actual size of any floor within the building. Some buildings, such as the Jackson Street Apartments, have significant total floor area but do not offer a large amount of square footage on any one floor. The floor plate affects building potential in that some uses such as museum space, large rehearsal and performance areas, and studios, require a significant expanse of floor area.

These buildings represent the only large buildings with development potential in the District. The Burwick and Caravan Buildings currently have acquisition costs that make them unsuitable candidates for affordable artist live/work space. The Odd Fellows Building and Jackson Street Apart-
ments are slated for renovation and reuse as mixed-income housing. The Boys and Girls Club and the PIP Shelter are currently in use.

The status of these large buildings severely limits opportunities in the Arts District for uses such as large galleries, concentrated artist live/work spaces, and institutional and organizational uses requiring large, open floor areas. Buildings with high floor-to-ceiling heights, a requirement for some artist studios, larger galleries, and perhaps museum spaces, are also in limited supply within the Art District boundaries. Storefronts with large windows are potential sites for gallery space but these buildings do not offer sufficient space to satisfy demand for the artist-related uses identified in focus groups and research for the Master Plan.

While large buildings are important to accommodate the range of uses needed to offer a concentration of arts-related activities, the smaller buildings in the District make significant contributions to the human scale and diversity of choices along Main Street.

Within the smaller buildings of the District, some need a high level of repairs and/or renovations:

781-791 Main Street
This building has an interesting stone façade with three occupied storefronts. The upper floor also has large windows and the total contribution to the street is one of a charming building. Rust stains, discoloration, and poor storefront design detract from the overall appearance of the structure.

751 Main Street
This two-story building of white marble and yellow brick has three storefronts and wide upper floor windows, making this an ideal candidate for galleries and shops. Rust stains and paint cover the façade’s fine detail and detract from its appearance.

A few other buildings need repairs and/or renovations with a relatively low level of effort:

747 Main Street
This two-story building has a yellow brick and stone façade in good condition. The storefront and façade could be improved with minor effort.

The Charlton, 705-709 Main Street
This two-story building contains residential units above the commercial ground floor. The building’s
yellow brickwork and stone entrance give it strong potential for renovation and reuse.

**The Albion, 765 Main Street**

This five-story apartment building sits across from the Jackson Street Apartments and defines the corner of Main and Jackson Streets. The red brick façade is decorated with iron grillwork and brick detailing.

"Revitalization doesn’t happen top down. It happens bottom up. When cultural activities are married with other issues then you create a solid foundation to build on."

- Civic Leader

**Significant Sites**

In addition to individual buildings in the District, other sites and destinations are significant for their cultural, historical, or architectural value. Primary among these sites is Oread Park/Goat Hill, site of the Oread Institute, a college for women founded in the late 1840s. The building existed here until 1934. The Victorian row houses on Castle Street represent the largest block of row houses in the city. Built in the 1860s and 1870s, these houses represent the prevalent single-family middle class home style of the period. The large manufacturing buildings, mostly vacant, in the Beacon Street vicinity include the Junction Shop, the oldest factory standing in Worcester. Shredded wheat was invented here and at one time, the factories in this area housed a loom works, water meter company, and organ factory.

**Vacant Buildings/Lots**

Seven vacant buildings, two vacant lots, and at least ten parking lots line Main Street within the District boundaries. As the Vacant Buildings and Lot Map illustrates, these “holes” in the urban fabric of the street have a significant negative impact on the District. Five of the seven vacant buildings are over 40,000 square feet in size. Two-thirds of the length of the District has an open lot or vacant building on one or both sides of Main Street at any given point, creating a condition where not one stretch of vibrant, active street level uses exists on Main Street for over a block in length without an interruption in street-level activity.

The current Arts District boundary encompasses 369,033 square feet of space available for development. This figure was calculated by identifying large-floor area buildings, buildings with the largest amount of total square footage, and a few small buildings in strategic locations or with special architectural or site characteristics. Of the 369,033 square feet identified, 125,000 square feet, or 34%, is represented by two buildings at the downtown gateway to the District – the Burwick and Caravan Buildings. These two buildings are ideally suited for artist live/work space, one of the single-most important components needed to ensure success for the Arts District. Current real estate market conditions indicate, however, that these buildings will be redeveloped into market rate housing and perhaps some commercial uses.

The majority of the remaining square footage identified for development is contained in three apartment buildings. Of these, the Odd Fellows Building and the Jackson Apartments are in the process of being redeveloped for mixed-income housing and commercial space. The third build-
Chapter Two: The Arts District Today

Vacant Buildings, Lots and Parking Lots in the Arts District
ing, a rooming house, is currently occupied and has not been discussed for near-term development. A dearth of suitable square footage for any major use exists along Main Street. Most critically, opportunities to create affordable artist live/work space are severely limited within the current District boundaries. While Main Street provides storefront opportunities for commercial and retail ventures, as well as space for future galleries, it does not have the necessary building types or sizes to satisfy the need for low cost artist space and other cultural and educational uses associated with an Arts District.

Street Activity and Public Safety

The character of the six-tenth of a mile-long District varies from active commercial zones, parking lots eroding the street edge, to vacant and inactive buildings. These conditions create long breaks in the building edge along the street that discourage pedestrian activity. Without high levels of activity, not enough “eyes” are on the street to observe and to create a safe public realm.

Throughout the Arts District, vacant lots directly off Main Street, especially south of the District, create havens for loiterers, illegal trash dumping, and drug dealing. The PIP Shelter at 701 Main Street has been an ongoing cause for concern among residents and businesses in the neighborhood. While generally acknowledged to be a very necessary service in the city, the shelter’s clientele are perceived to be associated with a high concentration of public safety challenges in the District.

Vacant, unfenced lots are gathering places for loiterers and dumping areas for household trash. Unsecured courtyards and backyards of vacant commercial buildings offer places for illegal activities and contribute to perceptions of unsafe street conditions in the District.

Access and Visibility

Regional Access

Worcester’s regional connections and visibility depend greatly on roadway access from the Massachusetts Turnpike and proximity to I-495. Interstate 190 connects the city to Leominster and Route 2 to the north while I-290 links the city core with I-495 and points east and to I-395 and I-95 in Connecticut. Worcester lies midway between Boston (46 miles) and Springfield (51 miles). Access is critically important to Worcester’s ability to capture regional markets. A 1-1/2 to 2 hour driving radius around the City extends as far as Portsmouth, NH; Providence, RI; Hartford, CT; Concord, NH. New York is three hours away.

“This project will help Worcester tremendously. The Arts District is a major gateway to the city.”

- Civic Leader
Regional highways connect to the city proper. Of particular importance are the local roadways that provide access to the Arts District. Roadway improvements currently underway to Route 146 will offer an efficient connection from the Massachusetts Turnpike to Southbridge Street into the District. These improvements to Route 146 will create an important new gateway to the District at Southbridge and Jackson Streets.

**Citywide Access**

Just north of the Arts District is the central business district and City Hall. Much planning has gone into the revitalization of the downtown area; streetscape improvements in the central business district, the new addition to the Main Branch of the Public Library, Worcester Centrum and the Worcester Common Outlets all make contributions toward restoring health and vitality to the downtown core. While streetscape improvements end at Madison Street at the beginning of the new Arts District, the potential exists to connect the District to the core and to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

To the southwest of the District, Clark University is host to 2500 students, with approximately 1500 of these living on campus. The Arts District functions as a gateway to Clark at the same time the university community of students, faculty and staff provides a potential market for revitalization of Main Street.

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (RTA) runs 30 fixed bus routes serving Worcester and the surrounding towns and cities. The RTA runs three routes along the length of the Arts District, including the 26S, the 33, and the 30S. Three other routes stop at the Madison Street gateway to the District. These include the 40, 6S, and 19S.

In addition to RTA service, the Colleges of Worcester Consortium operates an intercampus shuttle bus connecting Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Becker College (Worcester Campus), Assumption College, Worcester State College,
Visibility and Identity

Visibility and identity describe the physical attributes of the District and the images people associate with the place. As a newly created Arts District, the area has no visibility outside the city because marketing and promotion of events and opportunities has not yet begun. The area is only recently known as the “Arts District” but there are currently no major destinations or concentrations of artist live/work space that has turned this street of potential into a reality. Indeed, some people question why this particular area was designated as the Arts District.

The physical visibility of the District is limited and what does exist is often negative. This stretch of Main Street is a blighted neighborhood in many regards. As a connector between the central business district, with its streetscape improvements and core of city, state, and federal uses on the one end, and the Clark University campus and University Park Partnership improvement area on the other, the District currently lags behind in physical attractiveness, cleanliness, and commercial density and vibrancy. The presence of the District is not yet marked with roadway signs on major highway, exit, and city signs at key access points. The gateways to the District are also unmarked. The potential for creating an Arts District and the steps to make it happen are just beginning.

Summary

The Arts District contains many elements necessary for a vibrant successful urban community. Its location between the downtown core and Clark University, proximity to roadway improvements on Route 146 and resulting regional connections, and potential to be a visible District within the city and the region all support the future success of the District.

At the same time, there are challenges in developing the area as a first-class Arts District. Limited development opportunities on Main Street, high acquisition costs for some key buildings, perceptions of unsafe conditions in the District, and concern by some about the availability of municipal resources necessary for public improvements all create challenges to success. The chapters that follow address the opportunities and challenges offered by the District today.
Chapter Two: The Arts District Today
Chapter Three: The Arts District Vision

The vision of the Arts District is a revitalized Main Street with vibrant shops, a variety of restaurants, galleries, places to listen to music, buy books, CD’s or unique gifts, drink coffee, meet friends, and feel comfortable. The surrounding area offers affordable studio space and housing for artists and residents in the area. People from around the region flock to the Arts District to buy specialized items at Art at Home and the galleries or to learn about Worcester by walking the Discover! Worcester Trail. The Arts District is a draw to residents, students, families, and friends looking for a stimulating and welcoming place to be.

The Master Plan recommendations presented in this chapter reflect the remarkable public consensus heard during extensive community outreach of the master planning process and reflect the elements necessary to ensure the vision is a success. The basic building blocks for success of the Master Plan include the following elements:

- Expansion of District Boundaries
- Discover! Worcester Trail
- Opportunities for Public Art/Landscaping
- Areas of Emphasis
- Art at Home
- Development Potential and Building Reuse
- Recommended Program of Uses
- Zoning Recommendations
- Economic Development Analysis (see Chapter 4)
- Funding sources (see Chapter 5)
- Sound implementation (see Chapter 5)
- Dedicated leadership (see Chapter 5)
- Has a resident and business population that welcomes the Arts District Overlay Zone; and
- Is within the jurisdiction of an experienced community development corporation that has a proven track record in the Main South neighborhood.

What is missing within the designated boundary of the Arts District is a concentration of affordable space for a range of arts-related uses, including artist housing. Space meeting these criteria can be found directly adjacent to the District. The light industrial area around Beacon Street, known as the historic Junction Shop Manufacturing District, is an ideal location for artist live/work space and other related uses. Encompassing 523,000 square feet of space, these buildings have high ceilings, large windows, good light, and low acquisition costs. In addition, they are historic buildings and have a strong identity within the city. The Junction Shop, the oldest existing manufacturing building in Worcester, is located in this area. The concentration of buildings in this area can also help the Arts District Task Force achieve the goal of a density of arts related uses to create a regional destination within the District. The large spaces are ideally suited for gallery space, live/work space, museum space, workshops, showrooms, and light manufacturing of furniture, sculpture, and other such uses. The flexibility of
Chapter Three: The Arts District Vision

District Boundary Map with Recommended Expansion Areas

The Junction Shop Manufacturing District, an historic site in the city, offers affordable space, a strong identity for the District, and the flexibility and large floor areas needed for many arts-related uses. Including this area in the Arts District is essential for its success.

Extending the District to Federal Square provides a strong link with downtown and offers an exceptional gateway.

It is also recommended that the District be extended to encompass Federal Square as a strong entry to the central business district. Expanding the District to Federal Square addresses three issues. The current gateway to the District is at Madison Street, a major perceived barrier from the downtown. The change in street character, the width of Madison Street, and concern by some about unsafe conditions along Main Street between Madison and Hammond Streets all reinforce Madison Street as a barrier from downtown. Extending the District allows Federal Square, a pleasant urban space, to become a gateway from the downtown while Madison Street serves as a secondary portal. In effect, the entire area will read as one entrance to the Arts District. This expansion of the District serves a second pur-
Chapter Three: The Arts District Vision

pose. Extending the District along Main Street to Federal Square allows the District to overlap with downtown, connecting it physically and symbolically and interconnecting the areas of the city. Finally, the Showcase Cinema is slated for a renovation and return to a 2500-seat performing arts theater. Including this area helps strengthen the impact of the gateway, offering a strong anchor for the Arts District.

“Success will happen block by block, storefront by storefront.”  
- City Leader

Discover! Worcester Trail

The Arts District’s success will depend, in part, on the District’s reflection of the character of the City, and its ability to make connections to the rest of Worcester. With these goals in mind, a trail is proposed for the District that connects the area to the city and serves as a destination and activity for visitors and residents. The trail is envisioned as a network of markers that highlight sites and events having cultural, architectural, and historical or other special significance. This trail should be a citywide endeavor, with sites throughout Worcester, and with a broad array of individuals, organizations, institutions, and businesses contributing to its conception and implementation.

The first markers would be installed within the District and artists would be heavily involved in the design of the markers and of the supporting informational and promotional materials. Contributors to the trail’s planning could include Preservation Worcester, the Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester Historical Commission, area colleges and universities, organizations involved with oral history projects, ARTSWorcester, the City of Worcester, city businesses, and local newspapers and magazines. With each marker installation, a celebration could occur that includes an article on the history of the site in newspapers and magazines and an unveiling event on site. As the trail grows, it will become a destination in its own right—a path of discovery for the history of the city. The Discover! Worcester Trail is the embodiment of four characteristics of the Arts District:

- **District boundaries are invisible.** While the Arts District must have boundaries for the purposes of zoning regulations and to target city incentives, the exact location of the boundary lines will mean little to the average visitor and to most residents. The trail extends beyond and through neighborhood boundaries and zoning lines, uniting the entire city and connecting events, people, and places.

- **The District contributes to the city’s image and supports the city as a destination.** The District has potential to be a highly successful destination for the region. The trail is one element of the District, and eventually of the city, that will appeal to visitors and burnish the city’s image as a destination for cultural, educational, and family-oriented activities. The trail also increases understanding and pride in Worcester’s heritage and offers interpretive opportunities throughout the city.

- **The work of artists is intrinsically woven into all aspects of the District.** The involvement of artists should not be limited to murals and gallery shows. The design of lighting, the creation of parks, and the design and execution of trail markers can all involve artists and designers. As home to the first markers erected in the city, the Arts District will set the tone for the unique design of markers and the creation of the trail, exhibiting the importance of the city’s cultural community throughout Worcester as the trail extends.

- **The District is a place of discovery and serendipity.** What will inspire a family to visit the District on a Sunday afternoon? Why will visitors drive an hour from Boston to visit Main Street? It has become more and more difficult to find unique experiences as national chains and shopping mall development formulas work to present similar images, merchandise, and experiences to the mass market. The Discover! Worcester Trail provides areas of discovery in the District. An unusual marker points the way to a hidden factory building, unknown facts about Oread Park as the site of the Women’s Institute are revealed to residents, the history of Gilrein’s Blues Club is explained to out-of-town visitors. The opportunity to discover unique places and historical gems supports the District as a local and regional destination and enhances the aura of discovery and serendipity inherent in the Arts District.

Potential Sites for a Discover! Worcester Trail in and adjacent to the District are shown and annotated on the map. It is envisioned that ultimate decisions about sites and markers will involve a collaboration of many people.
Chapter Three: The Arts District Vision

Discover! Worcester Trail in the Arts District

[Map of the Arts District with various landmarks and destinations labeled, including Federal Square, Restored Theater, Worcester Market, Boynton and Windsor Apartments, Masonic Temple, Main Street Baptist Church, Oread Park, Castle Street Rowhouse District, Gilrein's Blues Club, Lucius Knowles House, Gateway at Hammond and Main Street, American Sanitary Plumbing Museum, and others.]

34 Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District
Opportunities for Public Art

Extensive opportunities for public art abound within the District. Artists, architects, and landscape architects can apply an integrated approach to design and art to enable public art and design to become intrinsically woven within the urban context of the District. The ramifications of this approach are far reaching and will mean a reevaluation of how some decisions are made in the City. For example, artists may participate in the design and selection of street lighting for the District and must work closely with the Department of Public Works and other city agencies. Developers and building owners may be asked to collaborate with artists to design façade renovations or building lighting. Graphic artists may work with highway officials to design Arts District signs acceptable to both. These opportunities support the element of discovery and serendipity the District will exhibit. In addition, the high visibility of art and culture in the District, and its contribution to the city’s attraction as a destination, will increase opportunities for public art throughout the city. These gateway and streetscape improvements offer the opportunity for the Arts District to demonstrate innovation and creativity, a strong identity for the District, and serve as a draw for visitors, new residents, and patrons of commercial establishments. Within this approach, five specific areas offer opportunities for public art:

- Streetscape improvements
- Specific public art/landscaping opportunities
- Surface parking screening
- Facade and minor building improvements
- District gateways

Streetscape Improvements

Main Street and Jackson, Hermon and Beacon Streets require a range of physical improvements that can involve artists and craftspeople.

- **Street signs** can be designed as unique symbols of the District. In addition District banners or flags can be installed along the streets of the District and special markers for destinations within the District can be crafted. The City should work in collaboration with artists to determine the design and materials for street signage.

- **Street trees and plantings** are needed throughout the District. Working in conjunction with the City, artists and landscape architects can help determine tree species, planting patterns, and locations. Planting can be targeted to sidewalk strips, designated open space, and perhaps the many parking lots along Main Street. Artists and Landscape architects can participate in the design of planting patterns and the selection of plants.

- **Street furniture** can be an important design element for the District. ARTSWorcester has had a very successful District Trash Can program in which 15 artists painted trashcans provided by the Department of Public Works. This work can continue with bench design, park furniture, bike racks, and street lighting.

Specific Public Art/Landscaping Opportunities

There are specific sites for public art and opportunities for the integration of landscape and art in designated areas along Main Street and within the Junction Shop Manufacturing District. Some of these sites are illustrated on the map and include vacant lots that could be transformed into small sculpture gardens and community parks and courtyard areas within the Junction Shop Manufacturing District. This historic district encompasses the entire inventory of the Beacon Street manufacturing buildings along Jackson and Hermon Streets. Other opportunities for public art include the design of roadway and highway signs directing visitors to the District and the design of Discover! Trail markers for the District and throughout the city. With a supply of vacant manufacturing buildings in the District, the possibilities are excellent for temporarily utilizing empty space for art exhibition, open studio, and...
Chapter Three: The Arts District Vision

Opportunities for Public Art/Landscaping
Chapter Three: The Arts District Vision

Parking lots account for most of the approximately 50% of the street edge that is vacant or inactive in the District. This detriment to the urban vitality of the street can be turned into an opportunity for artists and designers to exhibit creativity in providing surface parking screening. Screening can take many forms. The installation of sculpture and/or plantings may be one approach. Another approach is to provide fences or “walls” at the sidewalk edge to display art on festival days or on a designated day of each month. Still another approach would be to design special kiosks that could be installed in some locations along Main Street at the parking lot edge. These kiosks would offer retail opportunities for start-up businesses and home businesses, similar to kiosks in shopping malls. The small structures would provide additional activity and vitality on long stretches of Main Street with no commercial activity at the street edge.

Facade and minor building improvements

The entity responsible for implementing Arts District Master Plan recommendations and overseeing day-to-day programming of the District can develop a list of artists, architects, landscape architects, lighting designers, and graphic artists who are available for technical assistance and collaborative efforts for redevelopment, new projects,
Chapter Three: The Arts District Vision

District Gateways

Four main gateways offer a tangible opportunity to make a bold statement and welcome to the Arts District. Public design competitions should be held for the design of at least two gateways. These competitions can be regional or national in nature and will not only provide gateway design submissions but will also serve to publicize the District and bring artists to Worcester. Each gateway has its own character and each possesses unique opportunities for public art and physical improvements:

- **Federal Square** is a pleasant urban space within the central business district. Signage, banners, sculpture, lighting, and physical designs that celebrate the proposed performing arts theater can support the Square as a gateway. The excellent streetscape improvements to this area offer a good gateway to the District and minimal intervention is necessary here.

- **Madison Street** at Main Street serves as a downtown gateway. The intersection currently is a formidable pedestrian barrier and vehicular turn restrictions limit the impact of this gateway at the present time. This gateway serves visitors arriving from I-290 and points west. Signage for visitors arriving by automobile, perhaps a large sculpture at the intersection, banners, and improved traffic calming can all support this intersection as a District gateway.

and minor renovations. Building owners could then work with people from this list and generate new ideas for their building renovation plans.

The parking lots along Main Street offer creative opportunities for artists, landscape artists, and designers. This lot, adjacent to the Odd Fellows Building and Santiago’s Market, could be re-designed during the renovation of the Odd Fellows Building beginning in the Summer of 2002.
Chapter Three: The Arts District Vision

Hammond Street at Main Street is the gateway connecting the District to Clark University and points west. The presence of Dunkin Donuts with parking and two other parking lots on three of the four corners, make this gateway less defined than the three other entry points to the District. The parking vacant lot at 839 Main Street (at Hammond) might be used to create an inexpensive gesture to this gateway that would include parking, landscaping, sculpture, and signage.

Southbridge Street at Jackson Street will become a major gateway to the site when Route 146 improvements are done. At this intersection, the railroad trestle is a very visible structure and a gateway design should incorporate this trestle. Repainting of the trestle is a public art opportunity as is using the structure as a base for other forms of public art. Incorporation of the trestle into the gateway design would make a big impact. Signage at this intersection can direct visitors to the District.

Areas of Emphasis within the District

The expanded Arts District offers three very distinct zones: Downtown Gateway, Family/Education/Culture, and Dining/Entertainment/Retail, illustrated on the adjacent map. These zones are not meant to be use boundaries within the District but rather areas of emphasis; all uses will be encouraged throughout the District. However, the building types, sizes, and locations dictate use to a large degree, and as such, some areas of the District are more suited than others for particular types of activity.

- The stretch of Main Street closest to the central business district has larger buildings, three to five stories in height and most closely continues the pattern and style of buildings from the downtown core. This Downtown Gateway links the District to the civic center and central business district and is most appropriately used for housing and office uses.
- The middle portion of the District is home to the YMCA, the City of Worcester Schools Department Parent Information Center, the Jacob Hiatt Magnet School, and the Junction Shop Manufacturing District around Beacon Street. This area of the District can have a focus on Family, Education, and Culture. Manufacturing buildings are the most suitable for artist live/work space, galleries, educational uses, and a Center for Contemporary Art.
- The southwestern end of Main Street contains smaller scale buildings, storefronts, and "mom and pop" shops. Here, an emphasis on Dining, Entertainment, and Retail can support the small human scale of the two-three story buildings and pattern of small storefronts and build on the presence of Gilrein's House of Blues and other commercial uses at this end of the District. The area's proximity to Clark University can support the District as a destination, not only for regional visitors but for city residents and college students as well. At this area, a diverse mix of commercial uses, cafes, art galleries, and shops, will become a favored urban destination in the city.

Art at Home

As explained in Chapter 4: Economic Benefits, success for the Arts District will depend in part, on "growing the economic pie" in Worcester. The Arts District as a destination clusters arts and cultural activities to create a concentration of uses that is attractive to both artists and visitors/consumers. Within the concentration of arts-related uses in the District, the Master Plan identifies a smaller cluster of specialty arts-related uses intended to be a regional destination. This cluster of uses, "Art at Home," is a unique home center within the Junction Shop Manufacturing District. Up to 100,000 square feet can be used to offer unique, handcrafted, antique, and salvaged home items for the New England market. Art at Home would offer opportunities to view and purchase handmade hardware (glass door pulls, wrought metal handles and hinges); handmade tiles; wrought metal work; garden items; antiques; recycled furniture; weaving and textiles; stained glass; pottery; custom made furniture; custom lighting

The Hammond and Main Street intersection is the weakest of the District's gateways. The parking lot at this corner could become an opportunity for public art to define the entrance to the District.
Chapter Three: The Arts District Vision

Areas of Emphasis within the Arts District
design; antique prints and rare maps; and architectural salvage or reuse in building renovation or construction.

Art at Home would showcase local and regional artists, craftspeople, and retail businesses that specialize in unique, quality items for the home and garden. Businesses, artists and craftspeople must be actively recruited from the City and throughout the Northeast. While Art at Home can be viewed as a home improvement destination, it is not intended to be host to large national home supply stores or other chain retail outlets. These types of unique retail uses and artist showrooms and galleries are completely compatible with arts and culture-related uses in the Arts District and serve to attract visitors with disposable incomes to support the arts and culture of Worcester. Success of Art at Home will depend upon:

- **Business recruitment and incentives.** A critical mass of arts, design, and crafts-related businesses is a critical element of becoming a recognizable destination to consumers.

- **A management or oversight organization.** A non-profit community development organization, private organization, or business management organization could be engaged through a competitive process to coordinate efforts, solicit interest, and market retail opportunities at Art at Home.

- **Physical design improvements and excellent access and visibility.** Streetscape improvements and ample and safe parking can enhance the appeal of Art at Home as a regional shopping location.

- **Attracting and retaining “unique” businesses, artists, and craftspeople.** There is
no destination like Art at Home in New England. Worcester has the opportunity to carve a unique niche in this market.

- The success of arts-related retailers in Art at Home can stimulate other new businesses such as food and beverage purveyors and entertainment, and can offer the patrons needed to support the arts community in the city.

### Development Potential and Building Reuse

Buildings throughout the District have been evaluated for development potential and possible project opportunities. The map on Possibilities for Building Reuse highlights buildings with project or development potential. This potential was evaluated with the consideration of the following factors:

- Location of building
- Size and layout of structure
- Footprint (the size of an individual floor) and ceiling heights
- Estimated acquisition costs

This evaluation of possible projects and development is a suggested framework. The extensive space in the Junction Shop Manufacturing District will take years to complete. The large building size and space configuration, however, will enable great flexibility in assignment of uses.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Building Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Footprint</th>
<th>Total SF</th>
<th>Possible Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Burwick Building</td>
<td>653 Main Street at Madison – gateway building to District</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>Ground: Gallery/Retail/Restaurant Upper: 74 units of market rate apts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Caravan Building</td>
<td>661 Main Street Adjacent to Burwick Building</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>Ground: Gallery/Retail/Restaurant or school functions Upper: 30 units of market rate apts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Odd Fellows Building</td>
<td>674 Main Street</td>
<td>10,000 (est.)</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>Lower: 5545 sf for arts-related incubator space Ground: City Home Center Upper: 24 units of mixed-income housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jackson Street Apartments</td>
<td>767 Main Street</td>
<td>9,050</td>
<td>54,300</td>
<td>Ground: retail Upper: 40 apartments (estimated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>PIP Shelter</td>
<td>695 Main Street</td>
<td>13,851</td>
<td>69,255</td>
<td>Top story of building has a sloped floor theater for approx. 500-person capacity. Space has been divided up and floor leveled. Performance and rehearsal space possibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Boys and Girls Club of Worcester</td>
<td>2 Ionic Street</td>
<td>11,692</td>
<td>38,922</td>
<td>Club will be moving within three years. Possible site for Nativity School – Jesuit middle school for selected inner city children – will draw heavily from population adjacent to District.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rooming House</td>
<td>667 Main Street</td>
<td>10,389</td>
<td>41,556</td>
<td>Housing – 30 units of mixed-income housing units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>White Tower</td>
<td>650 Main Street</td>
<td>4200</td>
<td>4200</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Emmanuel Baptist Church</td>
<td>715 Main Street</td>
<td>10,296</td>
<td></td>
<td>Church with gallery space on lower level or other space in building, if available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M&amp;L Garage</td>
<td>779 Main Street</td>
<td>3004</td>
<td>3004</td>
<td>Café and Sculpture Garden with outdoor seating – lot is 30,342 SF (Brownfield site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>809 Main Street</td>
<td>2849</td>
<td>2849</td>
<td>Lot is 28,231 SF – can be redeveloped as new building at sidewalk edge with retail on lower floor and office above - 42,347 sf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possibilities for Building Reuse
Parking:

The economics of the District will not support structured parking for the near future. The identification of larger surface parking areas or vacant lots is intended to illustrate possibilities to share parking (day/night uses) and improve vacant lots to provide an adequate supplement to the on-street parking on Main Street and the side streets in the District. Except for special circumstances of existing large lots such as Santiago’s and the parking lot that exists at the corner of the Hammond and Main Street District gateway, surface parking should be discouraged from Main Street since it erodes the continuous street wall of buildings and does not contribute to the vitality of the street. New parking areas and/or service drives should be located in the rear of buildings.

“The vision for the Arts District should include viable businesses, shops, and places to eat. We should also see entrepreneurs that would weave together the non-profits in the area.”

- Focus Group Participant
## Possible Surface Parking Opportunities in the Arts District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Capacity (estimated)</th>
<th>Lot Size in Sq. Ft.</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Registry of Motor Vehicles</td>
<td>611-627 Main Street</td>
<td>100+ cars</td>
<td>Shared parking for theater when it is renovated, and for Downtown Gateway portion of District</td>
<td>Mostly empty on weekends and in the evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/C</td>
<td>Masonic Temple Parking</td>
<td>2 Ionic Street</td>
<td>100 cars</td>
<td>Shared parking for Downtown Gateway portion of District and Junction Shop Mfg District</td>
<td>Mostly empty during the day except for Masonic Temple events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Car Sales</td>
<td>681 Main Street</td>
<td>35 cars</td>
<td>10,637 Could be parking for District but would ideally be redeveloped in future for infill commercial/housing</td>
<td>Used car sales lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Santiago’s Market Parking</td>
<td>662 Main Street</td>
<td>180 cars</td>
<td>Parking for Santiago’s Market and the Odd Fellows Building – possibly some shared parking for District</td>
<td>Parking for Santiago’s Market and general parking for the District (in spite of “tow” signs for unauthorized parkers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>East side of Hermon – parking for warehouse businesses</td>
<td>26 Hermon Street</td>
<td>50 cars</td>
<td>14,000 (est.) Shared parking for Junction Shop Mfg District on nights and weekends</td>
<td>Used for adjacent church and warehouse businesses use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>North side of Beacon between Charlton and Hermon</td>
<td>27-46 Beacon Street</td>
<td>20 cars</td>
<td>7000 (est.) Parking for Junction Shop Mfg District</td>
<td>Parking lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Southwest corner of Beacon and Jackson</td>
<td>42 Jackson Street</td>
<td>90 cars</td>
<td>27,000 (est.) Parking for Junction Shop Mfg District and Main Street</td>
<td>Vacant – lot is sloped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>West side of Jackson</td>
<td>36 Jackson Street</td>
<td>55 cars</td>
<td>16,000 (est.) Parking for Beacon warehouses and Main Street</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>West side of Jackson</td>
<td>16 Jackson Street</td>
<td>33 cars</td>
<td>10,000 (est.) Parking for Junction Shop Mfg District and Main Street</td>
<td>Parking for District in near term and redevelopment for commercial infill in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>South side of Main between Hermon and Jackson</td>
<td>745 Main Street</td>
<td>29 cars</td>
<td>9000 (est) Parking for District in near term and redevelopment for commercial infill in the future</td>
<td>Parking for District in near term and redevelopment for commercial infill in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>YMCA on north side of Main Street</td>
<td>764 Main Street</td>
<td>127 cars</td>
<td>38,000 (est.) YMCA Parking and possible shared use during hours YMCA is closed</td>
<td>YMCA Parking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important to approach the parking plan for the District as a unified strategy. Zoning regulations that require parking on a building-by-building basis will discourage creative parking solutions such as parking sharing and will further erode the cohesiveness of the urban environment. The parking requirements for the District should be addressed by assessing all available parcels, factoring in on-street parking, and reviewing the hours of operations for the diverse uses in the District. At some point, as the District grows more successful and parking becomes more of a challenge for visitors and residents, investigation into the feasibility and funding for a structured parking deck will be required. The table above and on the previous page identifies existing parking lots and vacant lots that are opportunities for District Parking.

The District and surrounding areas have an abundance of vacant lots, some fenced, some not. Unsecured lots are havens for illegal trash dumping and are eyesores in the neighborhood. Some lots, such as this one, are fenced but not often used. Lots throughout the District can contribute to the parking supply for visitors.

There are some lots in the District, such as this lot at the Masonic Temple with capacity for over 100 cars, that are candidates for parking sharing agreements. When events are not scheduled at the Temple, this lot goes largely unused, especially during daytime hours. Likewise, the Registry of Motor Vehicles lot on the other side of Madison Street could serve as an evening parking lot for the District and soon-to-be renovated performing arts theater at Federal Square.
Activities and Building Uses for a Thriving Arts District

The Arts District must have a mix of diverse uses that supports 24-hour vitality. The uses recommended here serve the residential neighborhood, a community of artists and arts organizations, and a regional and local visitor population. This diversity of uses fits the physical and market characteristics of the District and the city as a whole, and reflects the goals set during the master planning process. While detailed feasibility studies were not a part of the Master Plan scope, the consultant team looked at available square footage in the District, the depth of the market in the city and region, and models from other Districts and revitalization projects to estimate a reasonable program for the Arts District.

The goals for the District include the desire for:

• Places for artist/public interaction: coffee shops, galleries, and performance spaces.
• Multiple choices and a diversity of uses to foster a rich creative environment.
• A safe environment.
• Affordable artist live/work space
• Ownership opportunities for artists.
• Good opportunities to exhibit work.
• Accessible transportation and parking for visitors.
• Strong recognition of the District; very visible positive image.
• Organization of events and places, one central place where you can get all info you need.
• Good social environment for artist interaction with their peers.

• Diversity and multiplicity of choices and uses.
• Unique experience for residents and visitors.

To reach these goals, a critical mass of residents, visitors, and businesses is necessary. Based on economic analyses and a physical inventory and assessment of the District, the following uses are recommended for the Arts District:

• **400 units of new housing**, including 200 market-rate units, 135 mixed-income units, and 70 artist live/work units (such units may range in size from 800 square feet to 10,000 square feet or more);
• **160,000 square feet of new retail** uses to include general retail, art galleries and restaurants at street-level in specific locations providing high visibility and sidewalk edge locations with easy access to nearby parking;
• **36,000 square feet of additional commercial** uses for office space, possible arts incubator, affordable space for cultural or other non-profit organizations, and other miscellaneous commercial uses in locations that may not be conducive to retail use (such as the proposal to allocate 5,500 square feet of basement space in the Odd Fellows Building for arts incubator uses);
• **80,000 square feet of other uses** to include public or institutional tenancies such as a Center for Contemporary Art and/or educational uses. These types of uses are considered critical anchors to help draw visitor traffic to the Arts District; and
• Approximately **120,000 square feet, of space for which the planning team has not identified specific uses.** This space is located in

Actions for Success:

• Create a strong image of Worcester as a cultural city.
• Market to artists and patrons alike.
• An aggressive marketing campaign is needed.
• Artists are small businesses. Treat them as such. Tap into student markets for potential residents and customers. Tap into their parents as a market.
• City must continue to take a strong leadership position on this project. Create affordable artist live/work space quickly, before space in the District becomes unaffordable.
• Coordinate code enforcement agencies so code requirements are clear (building department, fire department).
• Plan for gentrification – protect current residents and affordable housing for artists.

“Artists need people to see and buy their work. Bring us people, and we’ll provide the art and culture.”

- Artist from Community
the Junction Shop Manufacturing District. Market conditions will dictate potential future uses.

In summary, the plan identifies approximately 700,000 square feet of commercial and residential uses across properties that contain almost 820,000 square feet of space in the expanded district.

In addition to building uses, the program for the Arts District must include activities and programming such as festivals, open gallery night, street closings, and other special events. It is recommended that the Arts District play host to a range of events that could include the following:

- **Pedestrian Days** could occur on a monthly basis (perhaps the first Sunday of each month) and would involve the closing of Main, Jackson and Hermon Streets, with vehicular access to peripheral parking on Southbridge, Beacon Street, and Murray Avenue, as well as other side streets. These days would be marketed as family days and street vendors would be encouraged in the District.
- **Arts at Night** could attract residents and visitors to late-night gallery openings and shopping on an occasional basis.
- **Annual Festivals** support the District as a regional destination and instill pride in the residents.
- **Discover! Worcester Trail events** would occur each time a new marker is installed in the District. Appropriate public relations in local print media and special festivities would draw attention to progress in implementing the Master Plan and make residents aware of the unique places in the District and the City.

### Zoning in the Arts Overlay District

The Arts District Overlay Zone, adopted by City Council in November 1999, provides for certain new provisions within the Worcester Zoning Ordinance. The purposes of the Arts Overlay District (AOD), as stated in the amendment, are:

- To promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community.
- To promote the expansion of commercial art and craft activities as a compatible land use within the AOD.
- To enhance the environment and improve site opportunities for commercial art and craft activities within the AOD.

The overlay district allows for artist live/work space, gallery and exhibit space, and performance and rehearsal space in a new use designated as “Commercial Artist Lofts.” The amendment also allows all uses permitted in the former underlying zone, including manufacturing, business and residential uses. Non-conforming structures (structures not meeting minimum dimensional requirements or lot sizes) may be altered and/or renovated and the uses of these buildings may be changed if a minimum of 50% of the floor area is devoted to commercial artist loft use. The amendment creating the AOD also requires not less than one parking space per 1000 square feet of gross floor area in buildings designated a minimum of 50% commercial artist lofts.

While these zoning changes ensure that artists and arts-related uses can exist in the District, the requirements of minimum parking in the amendment, as well as the preservation of existing zoning requirements such as minimum building frontage requirements create a more cumbersome regulatory environment than is desirable for development in the District. The Planning Board is authorized to grant special permits to modify the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance but this does little to streamline the development process and to create a transparent regulatory environment.

The following are recommendations for zoning in the District:

#### Parking:

- No parking shall be allowed in the front 50% of parcels
- Parking requirements eased to reduce on-site
parking (this must be in conjunction with a parking plan for the entire District)
• Restrict or prohibit curb cuts along Main Street
• Designate “maximum” number of parking spaces to support District-wide lots and encourage density of building uses and continuous street walls)
• Allow other solutions in addition to landscaped buffers at edges of parking lots. Currently, landscaped buffers are required but the District could support a “hard” edged buffer that could include fences designed by artists, kiosks that support small businesses and street activities along inactive parking edges, and other creative solutions

**Dimensional Requirements:**
• All new buildings shall be built at the street edge to create a continuous street wall in the District
• Parking shall be in rear 50% of parcels or allocated to District-wide lots (with building owners contributing toward purchase and maintenance of same)
• Minimum building frontage to be waived in District

**Signs:**
Support an extensive sign ordinance for the District that accomplishes the following:

• Restricts use of internally illuminated plastic signs
• Restricts use of fluorescent lamps
• Encourages unique, artist designed signage
• Regulates dimensions of signage

*The Arts District Master Plan encourages uses that contribute to a positive pedestrian experience along Main Street and support arts and arts-related endeavors and products.*
Uses:
Allow the following in the District:

- Sidewalk cafes
- Street vendors, sidewalk kiosks, art installations
- Street performers and performing artists
- Street musicians

Prohibit the following in the District:

- New uses that cannot support 75% glass storefront along Main Street (solid facades prohibited on Main Street)
- Drive-thrus

Other issues:

- City to clarify code issues for artists and other businesses
- Street closings allowed on a regular basis (monthly)
- Market “one stop shopping” for developers and residents to simplify approvals process

Conclusion

These Master Plan recommendations offer a multi-layered approach to building success in the District. The recommendations create a framework for decision-making and action to support a District that is home to coffee houses, galleries, unique retail shops, artist supply shops, performance venues, architects, landscape architects and other design professionals, furniture designers and good food. All of this would share the District with larger educational and cultural anchors such as a Center for Contemporary Art.
Chapter Four: The Economic Benefits

As the master plan moves forward, the implementing entity must focus on the economic effects and long-term sustainability of specific recommendations contained in the Master Plan. As this economic analysis illustrates, the potential exists to create a range of economic benefits—not only for revitalizing the district and its surrounding Main South neighborhood—but also for the city’s overall economic growth. To that end, the consultants examined overall economic and market conditions in Worcester to help frame a preliminary analysis of economic benefits generated by redevelopment of several key properties in the district.

Introduction

A substantial body of research indicates, including the Creative Economy Initiative completed by the New England Council in June 2000 and other studies, arts and culture play a critical role in contributing to the economic health of communities. Several key ingredients are necessary before arts districts can play a transformative role in communities. These factors include:

• **Sufficient supply to create critical mass.** An arts district requires creative entrepreneurs, artists, performers and visionaries as the supply as well as buildings and other space as locations for artistic and cultural activities.

• **Sufficient demand to provide market support.** An arts district is limited if visitors and consumers aren’t available to provide market support. Multiple audiences are necessary to maximize demand. In Worcester, these audiences include downtown employees, nearby residents, city and regional residents, visitors and students. Identifying the amount of potential market support is critical.

• **Community.** Part of the excitement in creating the Arts District in Worcester is the cohesion that ARTSWorcester, the Arts District Task Force, the City, and the artists themselves have displayed to move the district forward. This collaboration truly represents a community, drawn to Worcester because of its diversity, stimulation and resources.

• **Non-profit venues.** On the non-profit side, an arts district requires anchors; Worcester’s universities, museums, performing arts schools and other cultural institutions are key elements.

• **Commercial elements.** On the commercial side, arts districts require performance halls, nightclubs, galleries and supporting or complementary services such as retail (e.g., coffee bars and bookstores) that serve to draw traffic and extend the visitor stay.

• **Direct benefits.** Innumerable direct benefits are created when an arts district is successful. These benefits may include ticket sales, parking revenues, support services for arts uses, business formation and job creation, sales and income tax revenues for the state and/or municipality, property value enhancement and private investment. One of the most important direct benefits, difficult to quantify, is the improved pride and confidence that is associated with Worcester with an invigorated Arts District.

• **Indirect benefits.** Similarly, the direct benefits created by arts districts also generate indirect benefits, such as new visitors who bring disposable income to spend on eating out, re-
The Arts District can help the city reduce the amount of vacant space in the District and surrounding areas and put these properties back on the tax rolls. Occupied buildings also contribute to the quality of life and vibrancy of a neighborhood. (Above and Below)

- **Reducing the amount of vacant space** in commercial and residential buildings throughout the Arts District and in adjacent areas of the Main South neighborhood.
- **Generating net new property taxes** for the City of Worcester from new commercial projects or rehabilitated properties and/or other uses as illustrated in the master plan.
- **Increased sales tax receipts** to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (and indirectly to the City of Worcester through state aid).
- **Creation of new jobs** in a variety of industries by attracting other arts-related fields or businesses (e.g., interior designers, architects, printing & graphics, media & advertising, photography, film production, etc.).
- **Improving the physical environment** of Main South (as noted throughout the plan), including streetscape improvements, public spaces and renovated properties that will enhance quality of life for both existing and new residents.
- **Strengthening the quality of life**, not only in the Arts District and its adjacent Main South neighborhood, but across the city as well. From an economic development perspective, this is key to retaining and attracting businesses, employees and residents.
- **Serving as a regional destination and attraction** that brings visitors to the district and the city, with their attendant direct and indirect benefits (and, as such, is a critical component of an economic development strategy).
- **Enhancing the number of cultural tourism visitors** to Worcester, including general tourists, events-oriented tourists, convention delegates and those visiting friends & relatives.

With these fundamental ingredients in place, arts districts play an important role in contributing to the economic development and growth of a community. The success of the Arts District in Worcester has the potential to provide significant economic benefits. The Community Partners team recommends that city officials and elected leaders consider the Arts District as a key part of the City’s overall economic development strategy. These contributions may include:

The consultant team conducted preliminary research on demographic and economic trends in Worcester to understand population patterns and trends, employment growth and consumer expenditures to help frame the economic analysis for new commercial and residential uses in the Arts District. We note that no market or financial feasibility studies have been undertaken on any of the individual concepts illustrated in the master plan. As specific elements of the master plan move forward, detailed testing (i.e., feasibility) studies and due diligence will be required by developers, potential investors and other third parties to assess the potential depth of market demand for various uses.

**Demographic Profile**

A review of demographic trends in Worcester reveals that the city, unlike other post-industrial cities across the Commonwealth, rebounded during the 1990s in terms of population and employment growth as noted below.

These trends are highlighted in a series of tables and charts contained in *Tools for Implementation*, the technical document submitted separately.
City of Worcester

- Whereas the city lost more than 20% of its population between 1950 and 1980, its population increased by almost 2,900 between 1990 and 2000, to 172,600 residents, a growth rate of 1.7%. (By comparison, Fall River lost 1,000 residents, New Bedford lost 6,000 residents, and Springfield’s population declined by 4,900 during this period).
- The population of those age 35-44 and 45-54 (largely the baby boomers) increased by 15% (4,800) and 11% (6,200), respectively, over the last 10 years. Since these age cohorts are typically peak earning years, it suggests that new commercial uses in the Arts District may wish to consider targeting these residents.
- Notably, the number of residents in Worcester age 21-34 decreased by more than 6,100 during the 1990s following the lower birth rates of the 1970s and as college graduates went elsewhere for employment development efforts in the city focus on attracting jobs that will enhance the prospects of retaining this age cohort.
- The city is also increasingly diverse; while the white population decreased by 10% during this period, its minority population expanded. The African-American population increased by 55%, Asians by 78% and Latinos by 61%. As of the 2000 Census, the city’s minority population was 23%.

Worcester County

- For the remainder of Worcester County, a sizable population growth occurred along the eastern edge of the County (e.g., Westborough, Shrewsbury) in communities that benefited from Greater Boston’s booming economy. The County’s population increased by 7%, to 578,300 residents, between 1990-2000.
- Significant shifts took place among specific age groups in Worcester County. While the number of County residents age 21-34 declined (as it did in the city), there was a significant increase—more than 48,000—in residents between the ages of 45 and 54, and smaller but still sizable growth in the number of residents 35-44 and those over 55.

Employment

Employment in Worcester typifies those trends found in many older communities across the eastern United States. While the number of jobs in the Manufacturing sector continued to decline during the 1990s, there was substantial growth in both the Services and Government sectors of the economy. Specifically:

- The city lost more than 3,600 Manufacturing jobs but gained more than 10,300 jobs in Services (a growth rate of 32%), which includes jobs in hotels, personal services, health/medical, legal and professional categories such as accounting, engineering and management.
- Surprisingly, the number of jobs in Retail Trade—which have jumped substantially across the country with the growth in disposable incomes during the 1990s—declined in Worcester by more than 3,200 (16%).
- As a whole, employment in Worcester increased by almost 6% between 1990-2000, to 101,200 jobs. This growth resulted in a decline in the city’s overall unemployment rate from a 1990-recession level of 7.3% to 3.3% in 2000. By comparison, unemployment rates stood at 2.9% and 2.6% in Worcester County and the Commonwealth, respectively, in 2000. However, in August 2001, the city’s unemployment rate had jumped to 5.2%, reflecting a softening economy.

Other Economic Indicators

The city’s economic picture is also portrayed in various ways—ranging from housing characteristics to downtown office occupancy patterns. On a positive note, the number of vacant housing units in the City of Worcester declined by more than 30% during the 1990s. In fact:
Chapter Four: The Economic Benefits

Housing Characteristics

• The city contains 29,000 owner-occupied units (41% of its total housing stock), and 38,000 rental units (54%). A number of factors have likely contributed to the 5% growth rate in the city’s housing stock between 1990-2000, including a strong economy, low interest rates, significant price escalation among many communities in Eastern Massachusetts and a housing market in Worcester that remains relatively affordable.

• The number of vacant units decreased from 5,500 in 1990 to 3,700 in 2000. The City is implementing recommendations from the City Manager’s Community Task Force on Vacant & Abandoned Buildings, among which included 26 recommendations to secure and reduce hazards in vacant buildings, such as a 75% tax abatement for residential buildings that are rehabilitated. According to the Worcester Regional Research Bureau, it appears to be effective—the number of vacant residential properties has declined from 225 to 151 over the past four years.

Downtown Office Occupancies

• According to the Worcester Regional Research Bureau, the office building inventory in downtown Worcester declined slightly, from 3.2 million square feet in 1997 to 3.081 million square feet in 2000. As in many communities with an aging commercial building stock, physical and functional obsolescence is a key factor in declines like this, as some buildings are either removed from the rental inventory or demolished.

• The downtown occupancy rate increased only slightly since 1997—to 82.4%. However, a more telling barometer of the health of a community’s office market is net absorption, which is defined as the rate of new (net) office space leased in a given period. In Worcester, there was negative absorption in both 1998 and 1999—that is, the amount of space vacated exceeded the amount of space leased—and positive absorption in 2000 of 66,600 square feet

• As of August 2001, the Research Bureau reported that 30 commercial buildings were vacant in Worcester.

As a whole, these indices point to a predominantly stable but soft office market in downtown Worcester. This fact would suggest that the central business district (CBD) would have difficulty attracting a speculative office developer (i.e., without a tenant in-hand) in the near-term. Stronger office market dynamics—positive net absorption, rental increases and the like—will be required over the longer-term.

Moreover, the pattern of negative net absorption might indicate a decline in the number of downtown office employees, estimated at 18,400 in 1997 to 17,600 in 2000. The Arts District’s adjacency to the CBD is key in that these nearby employees represent a “captive” market to support commercial and residential uses in the Arts District. Therefore, the City can play a dual, pivotal role in reinforcing the attractiveness of downtown Worcester as a viable office location while it focuses on strengthening the linkages between the CBD and the Arts District, such as gateway improvements at Madison Street and Federal Square.

“I’m looking for a place where I want to buy. That part of Main Street lends itself for an Arts District.”

-Worcester Businessman

Potential Economic Benefits

A number of specific projects are identified in the Arts District Master Plan. General economic testing has been conducted for a selected group—those that the planning team would cast as catalyst projects—to identify the expected economic benefits to the City of Worcester. Detailed feasibility testing of potential market support and financial analyses have not been completed and will be required of each project as the planning process moves forward.

The planning team notes the importance of distinguishing between marketability (i.e., the amount of market demand for a project), financial feasibility and economic benefit. Marketability is defined as the degree to which various factors (e.g., population expansion and employment growth) will drive demand for certain real estate such as housing or office space. In other words, how much market is available to support such uses. Financial feasibility—from a developer’s perspective—concerns itself with the capacity of a project to be financed by defining an annual revenue
stream in the form of rents less operating expenses to arrive at a builder’s profit margin and amount of annual income available for debt service. Last, economic benefits include both direct (e.g., construction and permanent jobs created by the new development, property tax revenues generated for a municipality) and indirect (e.g., additional retail spending generated by those households occupying the new housing units).

In order to test the economic characteristics of specific projects in the master plan, the planning team outlined a prototypical structure for a variety of land uses in the district. Some of these uses may require significant public intervention; others will be undertaken by the private sector in accordance with the plan. With new development, the increased property values in the Arts District will generate a revenue stream that may, based on decisions by local leaders, be the basis for public investment in infrastructure—such as gateways or open space—and other necessary improvements to the civic realm.

Program Assumptions

Table 1 (on the following page) highlights the program assumptions for eight specific properties located within the district’s existing boundaries as well as uses proposed for the 523,000 square feet of space located in the historic manufacturing buildings on Beacon, Hermon and Jackson Streets.

In the existing district, the economic analysis was completed for the following selected properties:

- 653 Main Street (Burwick Building)
- 661 Main Street (Caravan Building)
- 674 Main Street (Odd Fellows Building)
- 667 Main Street (Rooming House)
- 650 Main Street (White Tower)
- 767 Main Street (Jackson Street Apartments)
- 779 Main Street (M&L Garage), and
- 807-17 Main Street (with adjacent vacant lots)

These uses include:
- **400 units of new housing**, including 200 market-rate units, 135 mixed-income units, and 70 artist live/work units (such units may range in size from 800 square feet to 10,000 square feet or more);
- **160,000 square feet of new retail** uses to include general retail, art galleries and restaurants at street-level in specific locations providing high visibility and frontage with easy access to nearby parking;
- **36,000 square feet of additional commercial** uses for office space, arts incubator, Cultural Coalition space and other miscellaneous commercial uses in locations that may not be conducive to retail use (such as the proposal to allocate 5,500 square feet of basement space in the Odd Fellows Building for arts incubator uses);
- **80,000 square feet of other uses** to include public or institutional tenancies such as a Center for Contemporary Art. The existence of some of these uses in the District is considered critical to help draw visitor traffic to the Arts District; and
- Approximately 120,000 square feet of **additional space** for which the planning team has not identified specific uses. This space is located in the Beacon Street warehouse buildings. Market conditions will dictate potential future uses.

In summary, the plan identifies approximately 700,000 square feet of commercial and residential uses across properties that contain almost 820,000 square feet of space in the expanded district.

Current Assessed Values

In order to estimate potential new property tax revenues accruing to the City of Worcester from new uses in the master plan, the consultant team examined current assessed values and property taxes generated. This analysis is based on current tax rates of $17.85 per $100 of assessed value for residential and $31.46 per $100 for commercial.

- Of the 300,000 square feet or so located in
### Chapter Four: The Economic Benefits

#### TABLE 1

**SUMMARY OF PROGRAM USES FOR SELECTED PROPERTIES**

**Worcester Arts District Master Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUILDING/LOCATION</th>
<th>ESTIMATED GROSS BLDG. AREA (Sq. Ft.)</th>
<th>PROPOSED USES (Estimates By Amount)</th>
<th>Commercial (Sq. Ft.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Housing (Units)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Market Rate</td>
<td>Mixed Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing District</td>
<td></td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>653 Main Street (Burwick Building)</td>
<td></td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>661 Main Street (Caravan Building)</td>
<td></td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>674 Main Street (Odd Fellows Bldg.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>41,556</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>687 Main Street (Rooming House)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>757 Main Street (Jackson St. Apts.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>54,300</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>779 Main Street (M&amp;L Garage)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>807-17 Main Street (w/ adj. lots) (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>28,231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal:</strong></td>
<td><strong>296,291</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Say</strong></td>
<td><strong>296,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beacon Street Warehouses (5)</td>
<td>523,263</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Art At Home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Museum Annex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Craft Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Artists Live/Work @ 800 SF per</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Artists Live/Work @ 1,500 SF per</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Market-rate Housing @ 1,200 SF per</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mixed-Income Housing @ 1,000 SF per</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other Uses (to be determined)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal:</strong></td>
<td><strong>523,263</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Say</strong></td>
<td><strong>523,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Includes general retail, art galleries, restaurants at street-level.
(2) Includes commercial-oriented uses such as office space, arts incubator, cultural organizations office space, etc.
(3) Includes public or institutional uses such as City offices (Home Center), crafts and/or museum annex, or other as-yet undetermined uses.
(4) Assumes that existing buildings and adjacent vacant lots are redeveloped for 2-story commercial use over 75% of the combined parcel.
(5) Includes 64 & 79 Beacon Street (342,100 sq. ft.); 17-47 Hermon Street (113,400 sq. ft.); and 21-40 Jackson Street (68,000 sq. ft.).

**SOURCE:** COMMUNITY PARTNERS CONSULTANTS, INC.; ECONOMICS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, MAY 2002.
the eight catalyst properties, current assessed values are $2.16 million, or approximately $7.31 per square feet. This assessment yields more than $11,000 in annual property taxes for residential uses and $48,700 per year for commercial uses.

- The 523,000 square feet of space located in the Beacon/Hermon/Jackson Street buildings is assessed at $2.5 million ($4.78 per sq. ft.) and generates more than $78,700 per year in commercial property taxes.

**Potential Economic Benefits**

The potential economic benefits associated with this program of uses for each of the selected properties identified above were evaluated. Certain assumptions used in this analysis are identified as:

- **Residential development costs.** The model assumes gross development costs ranging from $20 per square feet to provide raw artist live/work space to $75 per square feet for mixed-income housing to $100 per square feet for market-rate units. These inputs are based on discussions with residential developers in the Arts District.
- **Commercial development costs.** The model assumes gross development costs ranging from $15 per square feet for general commercial to $75 per square feet for restaurants. These inputs are estimates and may vary depending on tenant fitout and building conditions.
- **Average annual construction wages** of $35,000 per year.
- **Permanent employment wages** of $25,000 per year (we note that this wage rate is an estimate and includes jobs ranging from retail clerk to gallery owner to office employee).
- **State income tax rate** of 5.03%.

“You can’t say, “If you build it, they will come.” It comes down an awful lot to the dollars. You need dollars to make this project work...the biggest nut to crack is the financial one.”

- Community Leader

**New Housing**

The addition of 400 or so new housing units in the Arts District is estimated to produce the following economic benefits to the City of Worcester or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

- Potential investment of almost **$38 million** in development costs
- **$15 million** in temporary construction income generating **$760,000 in annual income taxes** to the state during the period of construction
- **60 permanent jobs** generating $1.5 million in permanent wages for full-time equivalent jobs associated with housing (e.g., property manager, cleaning crews, maintenance, etc.) and upwards of $75,000 per year in new state income taxes

- **$33,000** in net new annual property taxes assuming that the City’s current residential tax rate remains constant. (We note that it is impossible to accurately identify the increase in assessed values of these specific properties attributable to new construction or rehabilitation. For purposes of this analysis, an incremental increase generally ranging from 30% to 50% was assumed).
- **600 new residents** living in the Arts District with an estimated **$10 million** in potential new disposable income each year, which is expected to support approximately 40,000 square feet of retail space. Disposable income is defined as income available after housing costs and taxes. We note that the 40,000 square feet of retail space is not location-specific.

**New Commercial Uses**

The Arts District Master Plan identifies a total of 400,000 square feet of commercial space, including retail and restaurants, the Art At Home concept, general commercial, anchor uses such as a possible Center for Contemporary Art and 120,000 square foot of other uses to be determined by market demand. The potential economic benefits accruing to such large-scale uses include:

- Potential investment of almost **$16 million** in development costs (the majority of this estimate, $10.4 million, is attributed to renovation of the Beacon Street warehouses)
- **$6.4 million** in temporary construction income generating **$320,000 in annual income taxes to the state** during the period of construction
• **As many as 1,000 permanent new jobs** generating $25 million in permanent wages for full-time equivalent jobs and upwards of $1.2 million per year in new state income taxes. (We have assumed that one job is created for every 400 square feet of commercial space across the catalyst properties).

• It is uncertain how much in net new annual property taxes may be generated by these commercial uses because of the City’s split tax rate (i.e., some of the properties identified in the master plan for new housing are currently assessed at the higher commercial tax rate). Again, it is impossible to accurately identify the increase in assessed values of these specific properties attributable to new construction or rehabilitation. For purposes of this analysis, an incremental increase generally ranging from 30% to 40% was assumed, with the Beacon Street warehouses increasing in value by 100%.

• New employees in the Arts District are expected to generate an estimated **$1.8 million** per year in employee spending on general retail (at $500 per year) and food (at $1,250 per year). This increased spending is expected to support approximately 7,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space. This expenditure is not location-specific and may occur outside the Arts District.

As identified above, these uses have the potential to generate significant economic benefits both to the City of Worcester and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The uses identified in the plan and their subsequent benefits will be added incrementally over time and will be a significant benefit to the city and to the region. More detailed information concerning current assessed valued of selected properties in the Arts District and the potential economic impacts of new housing development and other uses are presented in the technical document submitted separately.
Chapter Five: The Plan Into Action

This Master Plan for the Worcester Arts District presents a variety of recommendations on physical design improvements, cultural and economic development opportunities, and an overall urban design vision for the district. Putting this Arts District Master Plan into action will require:

• Leadership and commitment to implementation
• An implementing entity that serves as a catalyst for action
• Strong public/private partnerships
• Cultural programming and special events
• Technical assistance and marketing
• Financial incentives and resources
• A realistic plan for implementation

Leadership and Commitment

The most important factor for success of the Arts District is leadership and commitment to the Master Plan recommendations. This leadership and commitment must come from a variety of sources: the organizing entity primarily responsible for implementation, public officials who must play an important role in supporting public improvements and policies, and leaders in business and community development who decide where to place their next investment. Of equal importance will be the leadership and commitment demonstrated by the people of Worcester: the artists, families, students and residents whose engagement in the Arts District will ultimately be both the determinant and the measure of its success.

The initiative and leadership of the Arts District Task Force, ARTSWorcester, and the City of Worcester in carrying this project forward are important indicators of their commitment to the overall success of the Master Plan. To date the most unique and productive elements of the partnership have been its spirit of cooperation, active involvement, willingness to “roll up its sleeves” to work and its outreach to the broader community. The City’s decision to create a position of Cultural Development Officer within the Executive Office of Economic Development is extremely significant. The partnership with ARTSWorcester, a major voice for contemporary art in the city, and the 21-member Arts District Task Force representing key organizations and agencies in the city, offers encouraging potential for implementing the master plan.

The Implementing Entity-A Catalyst for Action

While a variety of partnerships are necessary to implement the master plan, one entity must be granted the authority and primary responsibility for encouraging and facilitating the range of actions suggested in the plan. This recommendation does not imply that this entity focus only on financial responsibility, total decision-making, or implementation of the various components, but rather serve as a catalyst for others to carry out the development, programming, technical assist-
Chapter Five: The Plan Into Action

tance, marketing and outreach for implementation of the Master Plan. Most importantly, the entity should feel primary responsibility for the success of the Arts District, working in close partnership with a variety of other organizations, institutions, public agencies, and other key stakeholders.

Possible options for an implementing entity may include: creating a new community development organization, placing the responsibility within an existing CDC, adapting an existing cultural organization or other consortium, relying upon existing City departments or agencies for implementation, or creating a new private development entity.

Some communities have established new non-profit organizations for implementation of arts districts or special areas with an independent board of directors, core staff, access to capital, and responsibility for fundraising for necessary improvements and activities. This approach is particularly helpful when there is not an existing organization ready to take on responsibility and when funds are available for initial start-up and implementation of the recommended activities. Worcester may choose to create a new non-profit (or adapt the mission of an existing one) in time.

Although a thorough review and analysis of implementation mechanisms was not part of the scope of this Master Plan, the preliminary recommendation for leadership is to create a public/private consortium of key organizations and departments that are affected by the Arts District, will benefit from its revitalization, and can offer tangible actions necessary for implementation. This entity may be an outgrowth of the Arts District Task Force or an adaptation of an existing non-profit organization with participating members agreeing to take responsibility for specific steps in the master plan. A strong and visionary individual who has expertise and the respect of the arts, community development, public officials and business leaders in Worcester should coordinate the implementing entity for the Arts District.

Public/Private Partnerships

Public/private partnerships are essential. No one group can do it alone. The range of recommendations presented in this master plan reflects the diversity of partners necessary to see it implemented. The following partnership chart reflects initial ideas about possible partnerships to implement various components of the master plan. This list should be expanded and strengthened, depending upon the interests, capabilities, and vision of respective groups in the area.

“What the colleges need more than ever is for Worcester to be successful.”

- College Administrator

Implementation of the Master Plan must be a collaborative effort among the key groups that will benefit from its implementation and that offer the vision, leadership, resources and capacity. Those involved may include representation from the following constituencies: arts and cultural organizations, local businesses, private funders, private and non-profit development entities, city government and public officials, public and private educational institutions, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, artists, and residents.

Groups with specific expertise may take responsibility for various components of the Master Plan. A non-profit or for-profit business entity may take responsibility for implementing Art at Home, for example. Likewise, a non-profit community development organization may take the leadership in developing a portion of the buildings for affordable artists studios or living space, while a private developer may be responsible for redevelopment of other buildings for residential or commercial reuse.

The chart entitled “Potential Public/Private Partnership Opportunities” for the Worcester Arts District Master Plan identifies specific opportunities, suggests partners who may be involved and responsible for implementation, and offers notes or suggestions with each entry. The specific opportunities are organized in the following categories:

- Physical improvements
- Cultural programming
- Development opportunities
- Technical assistance and marketing
- Coordinated Arts District improvement strategies
## Potential Public/Private Partnership Opportunities

### Worcester Arts District Master Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Opportunity</th>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Improvements:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk and streetscape improvements</td>
<td>City of Worcester, e.g. Department of Public Works and Transportation Sub-committees, Artists and landscape designers, Colleges and universities with art programs (local programs and Mass College of Art, Public Art Program), Museums and Craft Center, Business groups on Main Street, Resident organizations</td>
<td>Sidewalk and streetscape improvements should have unique public art/landscape components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway public art/landscape installations</td>
<td>ARTSWorcester, City of Worcester, e.g. Office of Economic Development and Parks Department, Urban Arts, Foundations, Downtown and area businesses, Artists and landscape designers, Colleges and universities with art programs, Museums and Craft Center, Business groups on Main Street, Resident organizations</td>
<td>Gateway installations could be part of design competition or specialized process for design selection. This work should be done as part of a larger marketing and visibility campaign for the City in general, and the Arts District in particular. Seek foundation, business, and other funding for design competition elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storefront façade improvements</td>
<td>City of Worcester, e.g. Office of Economic Development and Façade Improvement Program, Area businesses, National Main Street Center, Preservation Worcester, Mass. Historical Commission, Service Corp of Retired Executives, Small Business Development Center, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Technical assistance and funding incentives will provide catalysts for storefront improvements. A structure should be developed that teams artists and lighting designers with building owners early in the design or renovation process — perhaps this is a clearing house or listing of local craftspeople and artists and their specialty, with samples of their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street and traffic improvements</td>
<td>City of Worcester, Department of Public Works, Mass. Highway Department (as appropriate)</td>
<td>Application of traffic calming principles along Main Street and at the gateways. Review of effectiveness of current traffic regulations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter Five: The Plan Into Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITY</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smaller scale landscaping projects</td>
<td>City and neighborhood garden clubs</td>
<td>Collaborative projects provide opportunity for low-cost installations of planting, gardens, and green spaces in the Arts District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oread Place and Castle Street Community Gardeners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area artists and landscape designers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area businesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public and private schools in the area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys and Girls Club and other related groups for planting and maintenance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Worcester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CULTURAL PROGRAMMING:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover! Worcester Trail</td>
<td>Preservation Worcester</td>
<td>The Discover! Worcester Trail will highlight unique historic, architectural, and cultural attributes of the Arts District and the entire city designed to increase pride, awareness, and increased visitation to the area while encouraging collaboration among various public and private institutions and organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Historical Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Historical Museum</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ARTS Worcester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Cultural Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Park Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area colleges and public schools for oral history project to identify sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Public Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convention and Visitors' Bureau</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T&amp;G, WoMag, other publications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Women's History Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday night and/or Sunday events</td>
<td>Arts District Task Force</td>
<td>Coordinated events programming with area cultural, performing arts, and educational institutions will be a regular draw for visitors to the Arts District.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(biweekly or monthly) such as gallery nights,</td>
<td>ARTS Worcester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evening shopping, etc.</td>
<td>Local artists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area colleges and universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Cultural Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area cultural organizations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area businesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism and Convention Bureau</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Worcester (for street closings, police and DPW assignments)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITY</td>
<td>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</td>
<td>NOTES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special festivals and events, such as ethnic celebrations, poetry readings, music</td>
<td>Area musical, literary, arts, and cultural organizations</td>
<td>Main Street may be closed on selected Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays for special events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jams, First Sunday street closings, etc.</td>
<td>Colleges and universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Public Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YMCA/YWCA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boy and Girls Club</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Public Schools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Worcester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Centro Las Americas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Center for Worcester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Henry Lee Willis Community Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-oriented activities and events</td>
<td>Worcester Public Library</td>
<td>The Arts District can be strengthened as a special destination for families as special events and activities are created for this target audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YMCA/YWCA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boy and Girls Club</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Public Schools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colleges and universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nativity School of Worcester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area cultural organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

| ARTISTS HOUSING AND STUDIO SPACE                                                   | Private developers                                                                                         | Conversion of former warehouses along Beacon Street and possibly other sites along Main Street. Identify short-term demonstration project using public seed funding |
|                                                                                     | Community-based non-profit developers                                                                    |                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                     | Appropriate state or federal funding sources                                                             |                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                     | Private funding sources                                                                                  |                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                     | Artists                                                                                                     |                                                                                                               |
| COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG MAIN STREET FOR RETAIL AND MIXED USE                  | Private developers                                                                                         | Small scale restaurants, cafes, galleries, jazz bars, book shops, stores, bakeries, and other meeting places will be a draw and amenity for visitors to the Arts District. Initial projects may require public-private partnerships and public incentives to move forward. |
|                                                                                     | Business entrepreneurs                                                                                     |                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                     | Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce as part of marketing and recruitment                               |                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                     | City of Worcester, e.g. Office of Economic Development                                                   |                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                     | Small Business Development Center                                                                          |                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                     | Martin Luther King Business Empowerment Center                                                            |                                                                                                               |
## Chapter Five: The Plan Into Action

### Specific Opportunity: “Art at Home” home improvement district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private developers</td>
<td>Conversion of historic manufacturing buildings along Beacon Street to contain a critical mass of retail and artisan services for home and building design, renovation and improvement, decoration, and garden. Such tenants will reinforce the Arts District as a destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business entrepreneurs and artisans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists and crafts people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTS Worcester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Center for Crafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King Business Empowerment Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Marketing Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cultural and Educational Anchors for District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Worcester</td>
<td>The presence of at least one large educational and cultural anchor in the historic area known as the Junction Shop Manufacturing District will be critical to achieving a concentration of cultural uses and to attracting visitors to the District.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Developers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Center for Crafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Art Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cultural and educational institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Technical Assistance and Education:

#### Business development and technical assistance for small business owners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Worcester</td>
<td>The strength of retail as a destination use in the Arts District will rely upon the strength and viability of individual small businesses (e.g. levels of capitalization).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centro Las Americas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King Business Empowerment Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Development Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Small Business Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Corp of Retired Executives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Business Development Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MassDevelopment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Training in arts and other cultural programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Center for Crafts</td>
<td>Potential roles of arts, education, and cultural organizations should be defined after further consultation with these institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Art Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area colleges and universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass College of Art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing Arts School of Worcester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy of Music Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITY</td>
<td>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COORDINATED ARTS DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and public awareness</td>
<td>Arts District Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Worcester</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Cultural Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area cultural organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A newly created Convention and Visitors' Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved public safety</td>
<td>City of Worcester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police Department; Fire Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community service agencies and community development corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated implementation strategy</td>
<td>Arts District Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community service agencies and community development corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Worcester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worcester Cultural Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area cultural organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A newly created Convention and Visitors' Bureau</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Five: The Plan Into Action

Cultural Programming and Special Events

One of the most recurring themes heard in the research for this master plan is people emphasizing, “I want the Arts District to be a place where I want to go. Worcester needs a place where things are happening, where there is something to do, and where people gather.” Public art, open studio weekends, designated gallery nights, coordinated cultural programming, public “happenings” and weekend festivals – these are all activities that work well to draw people from their private spaces to gather in the public realm.

Permanent public art installations such as the proposed Discover! Worcester Trail can lead people through the District on a historical and cultural treasure hunt. Boston's Freedom Trail and artist Mags Harries’ bronze sculpture embedded in the sidewalks of Boston’s North End are examples of this type of self-guided walking tour. By programming more ephemeral public art installations the District could become an open-air gallery whose constantly changing exhibits attract repeat visitors.

Community-based, participatory public art can be most of the most effective ways to revitalize a neighborhood. One need only think of Barnaby Evans’ hugely successful WaterFire in Providence to understand the power of one artist’s vision to activate an entire city. The Somerville Arts Council and the Vermont Arts Exchange use retail windows as temporary art exhibition space; the Addison Gallery brought national artists together with public and private school students to create “SiteLines” along Andover’s Main Street; San Rafael, California turns into an outdoor museum during its annual chalk drawing festival that draws 50,000 visitors to the city and raises funds for a major youth arts program. This type of public art brings artists together with the community, engaging them as both spectators and participants in the art-making process.

The City can help foster these events by providing important public services such as creating temporary pedestrian zones and redesigning public spaces and streetscapes to enable such outdoor performances and events to take place.

Worcester has a multitude of cultural organizations, educational resources, universities, colleges, public and private schools, community and service organizations, and others who can offer periodic programs, special activities, and cultural activities to enliven the Arts District. The Arts District should be a place where every cultural organization in greater Worcester wants to have a presence. They may not necessarily need to have a physical presence in terms of locating their office or facility in these few blocks, but they should have an opportunity to perform there, show their work, and be involved in cultural programming and special events.

The Arts District entity, the City, the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, Worcester Marketing Corporation and other such groups would need to take an active role in marketing, outreach, and coordination of such events, working in conjunction with participating organizations and institutions. Providence, Rhode Island and New Bedford, Massachusetts are good examples of city government support for local arts pro-

Marketing brochures and literature, such as this pamphlet from South Main in Memphis, TN, will be critical in “getting the word out” and attracting both producers and consumers of art to the District.
With careful programming, organization, marketing, and outreach, local residents and visitors alike will say, “Let’s go back to the Arts District! There’s SO much to do!”

**Technical Assistance and Marketing**

A crucial component of the strength of the Arts District includes small businesses, cultural activities, entrepreneurs, and related commercial uses that will form the district’s core. Small businesses offer unique services, products, and personalized attention to customers and visitors. They would also benefit most directly from targeted technical assistance in marketing, outreach, storefront improvements, merchandise display, and coordinated marketing with other Arts District businesses and cultural activities. It will be important for business assistance organizations to recognize the unique opportunities and challenges that creative small businesses can represent. Woman-owned businesses, ethnic businesses, youth-run small businesses may have unique needs that will require some modification of existing business assistance programs. For example, the Massachusetts Cultural Council worked with first-time homeowner lending programs to adapt their program to the needs of artists seeking live-work space. Similarly, the Center for Women and Enterprise has expressed an interest in developing programs geared to the unique needs of crafts-based businesses.

The chart summarizing potential public/private partnership opportunities identifies just a few of the organizations and resources in the Worcester area that can assist in such endeavors. The Arts District management entity should play a leadership role in coordinating technical assistance and marketing efforts for the district, working in partnership with the new marketing initiatives being undertaken by the City, other cultural organizations, and local businesses.

"**The success of the Arts District requires courage and taking risks.**"

- City Leader

More detailed opportunities for technical assistance, marketing, public information and outreach, including possible funding mechanisms, should be explored as implementation of the Master Plan proceeds.

**Financial Incentives and Resources**

A fundamental assumption of the recommendations outlined in the master plan is that sufficient public funding and other resources will be dedicated to ensure the plan’s ultimate success. Many development opportunities will be phased in over a period of years, reflecting market and economic realities. Detailed feasibility testing will be required to assess the potential depth of market demand for specific uses such as residential, commercial, and mixed-use development.

As such, dedicated public-sector funding commitments in the plan’s early years will be critical in leveraging subsequent private-sector investment in specific projects. Over time, of course, private investment will grow, resulting in cumulative positive economic impacts to the city. (These economic impacts are described in this Master Plan).

Public incentives to leverage private investment may take many forms. Their availability will be determined, in large part, by the degree of support from public officials and other City leaders. To establish momentum for the Arts District, “early wins” are absolutely critical. For example, redevelopment of existing, vacant “anchor” properties such as the Burwick Building are important catalysts that will fuel interest in renovation and redevelopment of other blighted properties by the private sector. Therefore, early-on public participation in the form of low-interest loans and grants for building/ façade renovations, technical assistance, coordinated public improvements to infrastructure, public space and streetscapes, adequately-funded municipal services such as public safety, and expeditious public review of projects, as appropriate, are illustrative of the range of public mechanisms designed to offer incentives for private redevelopment.

Other improvements and incentives for redevelopment are not easily funded by the private sector but will be significant incentives in building confidence in the revitalization of the Arts District and the city. These actions include well-designed streetscape improvements, creative and dynamic public art and landscaped gateways to the District, and vibrant cultural arts programming in the Arts District designed to demonstrate the district’s strength and drawing power and serve as a further boost to private redevelopment.

The complexity and range of recommendations in this Master Plan necessitate a wide variety of
funding sources for its implementation. The public and private sectors must be tapped aggressively, emphasizing the benefits of specific projects to the community and the funder. Private development and natural market forces will generate development initiative, as it currently apparent in the district. Other public incentives will be required to spur additional activity. The technical supplement to this Master Plan presents an extensive list of possible sources of funding for implementing the Arts District Master Plan. Since guidelines, priorities, funding availability, and contact information change on a regular basis, this list should be viewed as a preliminary guide. Specific inquiries should be made with each potential funder to obtain current information on the latest guidelines, application requirements, and funding availability.

A Plan for Implementation

The steps necessary for implementation of the Arts District Master Plan Recommendations are summarized in the chart on the following pages. This table should be considered a preliminary guide for action. The Arts District Task Force, ARTSWorcester, the City of Worcester, and the implementing entity ultimately designated to carry forth the Master Plan recommendations will tailor this plan for implementation to meet their current priorities and preferences. The steps for implementation are organized by specific action, responsibility, and suggested timeframe within the following overall categories: implementing organization, physical improvements, cultural programming, development opportunities, technical assistance and education, and coordinated arts district improvement strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION:</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts District Task Force, ARTSWorcester, City of Worcester, and other organizations, such as CDCs, as necessary</td>
<td>Decide on organizing entity for master plan recommendations [called Arts District Partnership or ADP for the purposes of this implementation chart]</td>
<td>July - Sept 2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts District Task Force, ARTSWorcester, City of Worcester, and other organizations, such as CDCs, as necessary</td>
<td>Confirm composition of Board for Arts District Partnership</td>
<td>Sept – Oct 2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts District Task Force, ARTSWorcester, City of Worcester, and other organizations, such as CDCs, as necessary</td>
<td>Clarify and agree on specific responsibilities for implementation of various Arts District components</td>
<td>Aug – Nov 2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New entity</td>
<td>Confirm Board organizational budget and staffing for implementation and administration and source of funds</td>
<td>Sept – Nov 2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New entity with other participating groups, as appropriate</td>
<td>Set up working groups to address specific challenges to implementation, including: marketing, technical assistance, funding, Discover! Trail coordination, and design assistance</td>
<td>Sept - Dec 2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Worcester, with assistance from ADP and working group on design assistance</td>
<td>Confirm general scope and location of streetscape improvements and work with City to appropriate funding for improvements. Offer input into RFP for design services for streetscape improvements including sidewalks, street furniture, and lighting.</td>
<td>Oct – Dec 2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Worcester, ADP</td>
<td>Initiate traffic studies to confirm feasibility of traffic signal and flow recommendations</td>
<td>Jan 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Worcester / ADP</td>
<td>Issue contracts for streetscape improvements</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Worcester / Consultant teams</td>
<td>Supervise construction</td>
<td>May – Sept 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADP, Art Museum, Center for Crafts, University art programs, City of Worcester</td>
<td>Appoint a competition committee to attract funding and issue guidelines for Arts District gateway design competitions.</td>
<td>Nov 2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Worcester and ADP</td>
<td>Confirm areas for preliminary public art/landscape installations. (Also coordinate with streetscape work, as appropriate)</td>
<td>Oct 2002 – Mar 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Worcester, ADP, private development community, foundations, etc.</td>
<td>Identify potential funding sources and secure resources to fund public art/landscape installations</td>
<td>Dec 2002 – June 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Worcester, with technical assistance from ADP</td>
<td>Work with designers and artists to plan improvements and prioritize work</td>
<td>Oct 2002 - Jan 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>RESPONSIBILITY</td>
<td>TIMING</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue calls for entries for national gateway design competitions.</td>
<td>ADP and City of Worcester, in collaboration with the Art Museum, Center for Crafts, and area universities.</td>
<td>July 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with business entrepreneurs on storefront improvements and related business assistance, as appropriate</td>
<td>City of Worcester, MLK Business Empowerment Center, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, ADP working groups as appropriate</td>
<td>Jan. 2003 and onward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm potential sites for smaller scale landscaping projects and/or community gardens and use for each area</td>
<td>ADP, site owners, residents, area Garden Clubs, etc.</td>
<td>Nov. 2002 and onward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop landscape plan, plan for maintenance, and funding for each site</td>
<td>ADP, residents, area Garden Clubs, other potential funders, etc.</td>
<td>Jan. and onward 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement landscape plans</td>
<td>New entity, residents, area Garden Clubs, businesses, Boys and Girls Club, perhaps YMCA, and area schools</td>
<td>April 2003 and onward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CULTURAL PROGRAMMING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify potential partners for Discover Worcester Trail and create a new entity (perhaps a committee within ADP) to oversee Trail design, funding, and construction. Committee to consult with Urban Arts Institute and other public art specialists to determine public process, artist selection process, models, and funding sources.</td>
<td>City of Worcester, ADP, Cultural, educational, and historic groups as cited in partnership chart</td>
<td>Sept. – Dec. 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launch community process to identify key sites, pathway, and ways to mark and interpret sites for the Discover Worcester Trail in the Arts District. Develop project RFP and budget</td>
<td>Cultural, educational, and historic groups as cited in partnership chart</td>
<td>Sept – Dec. 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure funding for Trail</td>
<td>Cultural, educational, and historic groups as cited in partnership chart</td>
<td>January –June 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“This project should be an aggressive partnership between the City and the universities. They need each other.”

- College Administrator
### Chapter Five: The Plan Into Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop educational and public awareness approach for Discovey Worcester Trail</td>
<td>Cultural, educational, and historic groups as cited in partnership chart with ADP and Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. Area publications</td>
<td>July- Dec. 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and confirm specific cultural programs to be scheduled and held at the Arts District, including Thursday night or Sunday afternoon events, special festivals and periodic cultural activities, and family-oriented events</td>
<td>Cultural, educational, and institutional groups as identified in partnership chart, City of Worcester</td>
<td>Sept.- Dec. 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate program schedule, requirements for holding events, marketing and public notification, security, set-up, and clean-up for events</td>
<td>Cultural, educational, and historic groups as cited in partnership chart, City of Worcester</td>
<td>Continual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use master plan recommendations and graphics to prepare a marketing tool to attract investment to the District.</td>
<td>City of Worcester, ADP</td>
<td>Sept. 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm most appropriate buildings for redevelopment for affordable artists studios and artists housing</td>
<td>Artists, potential developers, community-based development organizations, ADP</td>
<td>Sept.-December 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify match of potential developers and specific buildings for reuse and assist with outreach to artists, funders, and city officials, as appropriate</td>
<td>Artists, potential developers, community-based development organizations, ADP</td>
<td>Sept.-December 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building redevelopment, marketing, and sales or lease</td>
<td>Development partners</td>
<td>Jan. 2003 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm retail opportunities in the Arts District and potential business entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Business community, developers, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, new entity, and others</td>
<td>Fall 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify match of potential developers, entrepreneurs, and specific buildings for reuse and assist with outreach to businesses, funders, and city officials, as appropriate</td>
<td>Business community, developers, banks, funders, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, new entity, and others</td>
<td>Sept. 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial development and revitalization occurs along Main Street</td>
<td>Business community, developers, banks, and others</td>
<td>Jan. 2003 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand concept and market feasibility for “Art at Home” at site of former mills buildings along Beacon Street</td>
<td>Business community, market consultants, developers, banks, and others</td>
<td>Oct. 2002 to January 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on development approach for Art at Home, outreach to potential tenants, financing and design implications, and responsibility for implementation</td>
<td>Business community, market consultants, developers, banks, design team, and others</td>
<td>Jan. to June 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure financing and begin building renovation and gradual renovation of buildings to “Art at Home”</td>
<td>Banks and funding sources, business community, tenants, developers, banks, and others</td>
<td>July 2003 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>RESPONSIBILITY</td>
<td>TIMING</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATION:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create storefront display in the Arts District with enlarged drawings, maps, and key ideas from the Master Plan to educate the public and potential partners and to create interest in the project</td>
<td>Arts District Task Force, ARTSWorcester, City of Worcester, and owner of building with storefront space</td>
<td>August – Sept. 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify businesses and entrepreneurs who would like to participate in business improvement programs and assist in coordination with providers of such services</td>
<td>ADP, Centro Las Americas, MLK Business Empowerment Center, City of Worcester</td>
<td>Sept-Dec. 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business owners and entrepreneurs participate in relevant programs to help strengthen their businesses and the overall Arts District</td>
<td>Participating businesses and groups providing such services</td>
<td>Oct. 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify businesses and artists/crafts people with services and work that would be relevant for the Art at Home facility. Provide connections to education and technical assistance program related to those interests.</td>
<td>ADP, related businesses, Worcester Center for Crafts, MLK Business Empowerment Center</td>
<td>Jan. 2003 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COORDINATED ARTS DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify strategy necessary for marketing and public awareness of activities, programs, and development opportunities within the Arts District</td>
<td>ADP, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, local and regional newspapers, radio, and TV outlets, cultural organizations, and related businesses</td>
<td>Jan. 2003 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree on specific responsibilities for implementation of marketing strategy, time frame, funding, and coordination and carry out marketing and public awareness plan</td>
<td>ADP, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, local and regional newspapers, radio, and TV outlets, cultural organizations, and related businesses</td>
<td>March 2003 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve public safety of Arts District and surrounding area through increased community policing, enforcement of existing regulations, and adherence to building and health department codes</td>
<td>City of Worcester, PIP Shelter, property owners, residents, business owners</td>
<td>Sept 2002 and onward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The master planning process for the Arts District involved discussions and interviews with residents, business people, civic leaders, artists, and institutional/organizational leaders. The list below represents those people who participated in a focus group session and/or one-on-one interview with Community Partners Consultants, Inc. This list does not include over one hundred people who attended public meetings and offered input into the master planning process.

Abramoff, Larry
Attwood, Maryon
Bacon, Elizabeth
Barthelson, Lisa
Bassett, John
Bilotta, Mark
Blais, Craig
Breault, Billy
Burgdorf, Ann
Cary, Deb
Ciccone, George
Clarkson, Patricia
Davagian, Brian
Demoga, Paul
Dusoe, Gary
Fering, Naome
Fellenz, Peter
Fletcher, Allen
Fletcher, Nina
Fletcher, Warner
Florez, Maria
Flynn, Ann
Foley, Jack
Giordano, Spartan
Hachey, Michael
Hall, Gloria
Haller, Barbara
Harrington, James
Haydorn, Ron
Hamil Talman, Donna
Howard, Donald
Hayman, Scott
Hickey, Jim
Hoover, Thomas R.
Irish, Dennis
Jacobson, Julie
Johnston, Kallin
Johnston, J-Me
Juhl, Jonathan
Kardokas, Chris
Kruger, Rob
Laverdure, Ellen
Leach, David
Lenis, Sarah Callahan
Lukes, Konstantina
Lisi, Ann T.
MacIntyre, Sandra
MacPherson, Rick
Madaus, Ed
Marchand, Blain
McFarland, Father Michael
Maines, Daniela Munoz
McGovern, James P.
McTigue, Ann
Melville, Donald
Miller, Carlotta
Mulligan, Fred
Murray, Timothy P.
Nelson, John
Niddrie, Philip J.
Nigosian, Paul
Nigrosh, Leon
O’Mally, Tom
Orozco, Teresita
Pax, Clyde
Penka, Ruth Ann
Prescott, Wayne
Proffitt, Christine
Rainey, Ann
Ram, Jason
Rappaport, Jonathan
Rickles, Wendy
Rivera, Miguel
Roman, Susan
Roy, Stanley
Salerno, Jodi
Salmon, Tom
Sawyer, Jean
Schaeffer, Roberta
Stoops, Susan
Thomas, Robert
Tilton, Tony
Traina, Polly
Vayo, Donna
Vazquez, Dolly
Wade, Wyatt
Wallace, Scott
Weinberg, Lisa
Welu, James
Zitomersky, Frank