



Arts & Culture

Our city is alive with creativity, as evidenced by vibrant arts and creative sectors, a growing innovation economy, and neighborhoods where diverse cultural traditions thrive. At the same time, Bostonians know that their city has not yet reached its full potential for arts and culture, particularly in terms of making art more prevalent in people’s day-to-day lives and reflecting the city’s diversity.

Arts and culture should have a place at the center of the city’s contemporary identity. The following initiatives are intended to give the arts a significant presence in our neighborhoods,

strengthen the diversity of our arts and cultural organizations, and provide these organizations and artists with the infrastructure and space they need to do their work.

Boston Creates

The City recently released “Boston Creates,” a ten-year cultural plan for Boston that allocates new funding for the arts. The plan aims to align public and private resources to strengthen cultural vitality over the long term and weave arts and culture into the fabric of everyday life. Along with setting five strategic goals, the plan calls for a cultural shift in the way City government and the private sector approach and prioritize arts and culture.

← Bartlett Yard, Roxbury

This is what inspires us to act.

Boston is home to 1,500 nonprofit arts and culture organizations.⁵⁰ Through both Boston Creates and Imagine Boston, many of these

organizations and artists called for affordable spaces to live and work as well as reducing silos between arts organizations.



Swan Boat Opening Day, Boston Common, April 16, 2016 ↓

Institute of Contemporary Art, South Boston Waterfront →

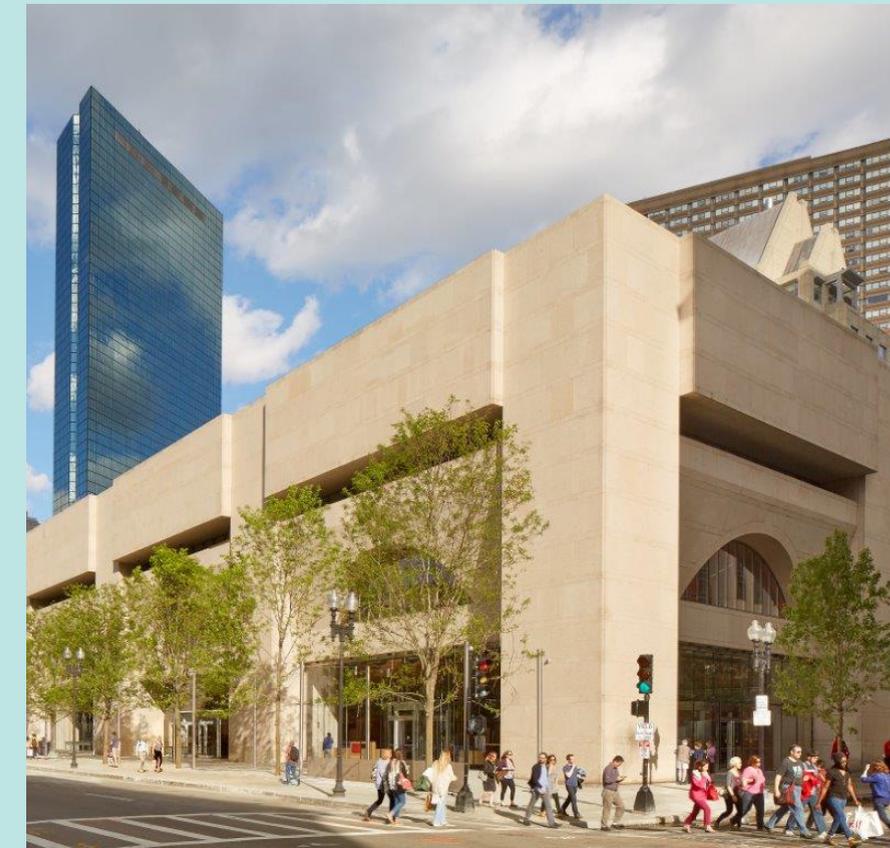
Art installation at the Boston Center for Arts Plaza →



"All ages live music venues supported by the Mayor's Office of Arts [and Culture] AND the [Mayor's] Office of Economic Development. Music is economic development!!!!"
Roxbury resident via text message

"Support local artists to create public art in neighborhoods."
Dorchester resident via community workshop

"Let music, the arts, and culture thrive"
Allston resident via travelling display feedback



The renovated Central Library in Copley Square is an important cultural anchor and entry point for the Avenue of the Arts and Boston's Literary Cultural District.

The Central Library reopened in July 2016 after a two-and-a-half-year renovation that reimagined the library experience for the twenty-first century. One highlight is the high-tech lecture hall fit to host musical performances, lectures, and author talks.

We will:

Foster the creation of at least three Arts Innovation Districts

We will harness existing cultural activity and capitalize on the physical attributes unique to each neighborhood to support diverse cultural activity. This will be done using zoning and other regulatory tools to support the development of cultural spaces and by repurposing City-owned buildings to support arts organizations.

Partner with cultural anchors and strengthen midsize and smaller cultural organizations

Boston has long been a global center of culture—home to dozens of organizations that shape the public experience in Boston. We will work to support neighborhood-based cultural institutions that reflect the distinct histories of Boston's neighborhoods and communities.

Strengthen the Boston Public Library

We will execute a slate of branch renovation projects, continue improvements to the Central Library at Copley Square, and support BPL's growth as a citywide educational, cultural, and civic institution.

"Affordable artist housing and live/work space[...] incentiv[iz]e developers to create such non-main-stream housing projects"
Resident via draft plan feedback

Assess the growing need for flexible rehearsal and performance spaces

Many cultural institutions in Boston identified the need for new or flexible rehearsal and performance space. The City is undertaking a study of cultural-facility capacity and demand citywide. The outcomes of this study will guide City decision-making and support for existing and new cultural institutions.

Expand investment in art and design in the public realm

We will expand art in public spaces through a Percent-for-Art program on municipal construction projects and ask private developers to follow our example. Through partnerships, we will work to bring compelling temporary and permanent public art to Boston's streets and open spaces. We will explore streamlining design standards in pilot plazas, parklets, and other open space.

Support individual artists through direct grants

These competitive grants will support the day-to-day work of artists who live and work in Boston's neighborhoods, thereby strengthening the diversity of neighborhood arts and culture.

"Let's create a shared practice space environment for musicians. I've known many Bostonians who've had to give up their hobby of playing an instrument or playing in a band because practicing in an apartment complex or dense neighborhood is impossible. Let's create a space where musicians can come from all over the city and reserve practice spaces."
Brighton resident via online mapping comments

Support existing artists and attract new artists through affordable space to live and work

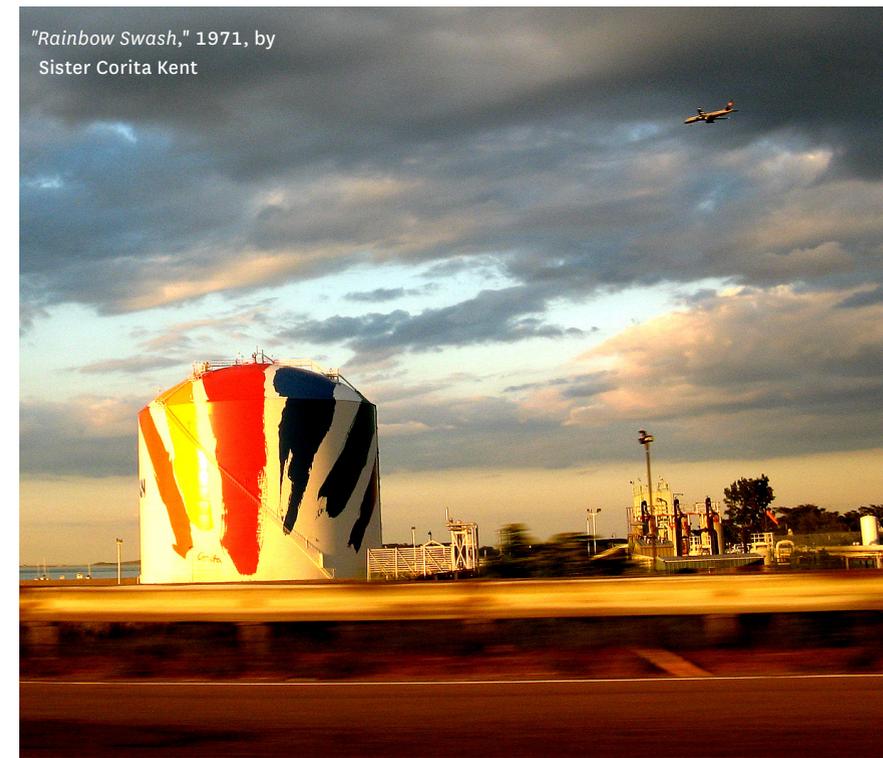
Like many Boston residents, artists noted pressing needs for affordable housing and work space. As part of our broad efforts to increase housing supply, we will explore the development of affordable artist housing and live/work space.

Integrate art and creativity into daily City work

Through the Boston Artists in Residence Program, we will embed working artists in City departments and agencies. These artists will work with City staff to promote creative thought in municipal problem-solving and project implementation.

Improve how the City supports artists

We will leverage an Artist Resource Desk in City Hall. The desk will provide those in the arts sector with a personal liaison inside City Hall who can help them navigate different processes and find the resources they need for their creative projects.



"Rainbow Swash," 1971, by Sister Corita Kent

Faces of Dudley mural, Washington Street and Malcolm X Boulevard, by Mike Womble



Arts Principles

- › Art should function as a grounding point for community-providing gathering places, a shared point of reference, or a new way for people to interact with and understand each other.
- › Arts and culture should be intrinsic to any healthy community, just like housing, economic development, education and transportation. Art and culture should be integrated into the planning process at the beginning.
- › Major new infrastructure should incorporate art into its design. This type of thinking is already at play in Boston, with the use of the Big Dig tunnel vent as a giant mural wall, or Corita Kent's Rainbow Swash gas tank.
- › Art should be integrated into new building developments. The City is leading this effort with its Percent-for-Art Program, which budgets 1 percent of all capital borrowing for art. It is the hope that private developers will follow the City's lead and institutionalize creative and artistic expression as a routine aspect of the urban development process.
- › Art should reflect the full diversity of people in Boston and be used to encourage communities to bridge differences. All cultural expressions should be honored equitably.



Online and in workshops in Summer 2016, residents shared ideas for making Boston a more creative city.

One Dorchester resident suggested: "Tax incentives to builders or property owners who keep creative/maker/rehearsal/studio spaces would go a long way toward closing the gap between what creative people can reasonably afford and what building owners would like to charge."