



PITTSFIELD CULTURAL PLAN

at the intersection of art and community

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Our Town projects advance local economic, physical, or social outcomes in communities, ultimately laying the groundwork for systems change and centering equity.



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CITY OF PITTSFIELD

Justine Dodds
Jen Glockner
Ryan W. Grennan
James McGrath
Michael Obasohan
Alex Reczkowski
Jesse Tobin McCauley
Catherine VanBramer
Jen VanBramer

CITY OF PITTSFIELD ARTIST LIAISONS

Michael Carty
Luana Dias David
Elizabeth Heller
Jesse Tobin McCauley
Asilijoe Ohinene
Peter Vacchina

STEERING COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTORS

Rebecca Brien
Reverend Michael Denton
Sharron Frazier-McClain
Luis Granda
Kristin Grippo
Lesley Herzberg
Carrie Holland
Michael Hitchcock
Ryan LaBoy
John Lewis
Martin Mansfield
Mark Mellinger
Nick Paleologos
Kimberley Bush Tomio
Yvette Jamuna Sirker

TEAM R3SET

John Lewis
Devin Shea
Dubois Thomas

TEAM R3SET CONTRIBUTOR

18 Degrees BIPOC Youth
Bryan House
Sharron Frazier-McClain

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Reverend Joel Bergeland
Barbara Bizzi
Melissa Canavan
Cass Santos-China
Lindsay A. Cornwell
Clients at 2nd Street Chances
Kimberly Conant
Marina Dominguez
Lisa Donovan
Sally English
Deisy Escobar
Martha Escobar
Rosalia Gonzalez
Marion Grant
Julie Haagenonson
Tessa Kelly
Princeton University Architecture Students
Tristan Manzolini
Julie MacDonald
Living in Recovery Clients
Diane Pearlman
Shany Porras
Marney Schorr
Jonah Sykes

PITTSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

James Barry
Kyla Blocker
Mike Greenburg
Alisa Mierzejewsk
Kellie O'Hagerty
Lisa Ostellino
Ashley Paradis
Colleen Quinn
Pittsfield High School Students

ART PHARMACY

Adrienne Hudley

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS

Habitat for Humanity ReStore
Pittsfield Community TV

TRANSLATOR

Berkshire Language Management



THE CITY OF PITTSFIELD
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
70 Allen Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 499-9321 • pmarchetti@cityofpittsfield.org

Peter M. Marchetti
Mayor

Dear Pittsfield Residents,

Today, I am pleased to share with you the publication of Pittsfield's first Cultural Plan. For generations, Pittsfield has made the arts central to its identity. As early as 1903, visionary leaders recognized that the arts were critical to the city's legacy and celebrated their importance by opening The Colonial Theatre and Berkshire Museum. These institutions continue to provide not only Pittsfield but all of Western Massachusetts with world-class culture, which is something that we can all be proud of. Along with the many arts organizations and individual artists that now call our city home, we are reminded of the universal need art speaks to: sharing our stories with others.

In these last few years, art has become more important than ever to our collective experience by helping us make sense of world-changing events like a global pandemic for which few were prepared. For arts establishments, COVID-19 meant temporarily shutting their doors or shifting from in-person to online outreach at a time when we needed them most. Many questioned whether they would survive and wondered whether audiences would return when it was over.

Thankfully, the answer is a resounding yes, admittedly with changes, including many for the better.

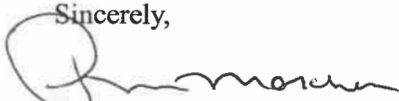
How we interact with the arts today is no longer limited to theaters, museums, and galleries but has expanded to include art we make at home over Zoom with others remotely; movies made on cell phones that will be shared on YouTube rather than in cinemas, and experiments in artificial intelligence, allowing creators to imagine worlds that would otherwise not exist. These are just a few examples.

But it is in part because of this fast-evolving landscape that Pittsfield needs a Cultural Plan now more than ever, too. For while many would argue that the city has come back from the COVID-19 pandemic stronger than before, as seen in the re-launch of First Friday Artswalk, Berkshire Pride, the Pittsfield Jazz Festival, and Art Week Berkshires, we cannot rest on the laurels of our creative past and need to envision a dynamic creative future that inspires and thrives.

With funding from the *Our Town* Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the generous support of the city's creative institutional leaders, artists, arts educators, creative business owners, and residents, all of whom share a passion for making art available to all, we lay out, in the pages that follow, a map for what that future can look like, complete with a vision, goals, objectives, and actions to ensure the sustainability and vibrancy of culture in our city for generations to come.

We invite you to join us on this journey toward creative renewal. With your help, we can raise our voices in collective unison, expressing our love for the city we share: Pittsfield.

Sincerely,



Peter M. Marchetti, Mayor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Pittsfield, in partnership with Berkshires Tomorrow, the nonprofit arm of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), is pleased to present the city's first-ever Cultural Plan. Funded by an *Our Town* grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the Cultural Plan calls attention to the central role the arts and culture play in Pittsfield's identity. It also offers recommendations for how the city and its partners can use the arts to restore a sense of civic pride and support residents, businesses, social service organizations, and religious institutions.

Work on the Cultural Plan began in September 2023, when the four grantees (The City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development, Berkshires Tomorrow, Downtown Pittsfield, Inc., Berkshire Black Economic Council) first met to discuss the potential approach to the planning process.. The group quickly expanded to include arts and community leaders, artist liaisons, small business owners, and the public – residents and visitors. Their generous contributions of time, energy, and ideas have resulted in a plan that is broad in its reach but specific in its goals and objectives.

Following a year-plus process of discussions, surveys, and research, the plan has three key aims:

- Restore civic pride by fostering a diverse arts and culture landscape in which all feel welcome and included.
- Nurture residents' individual and collective ability to express themselves creatively.
- Recognize and support artists and arts organizations as resources that enhance the community socially, emotionally, and economically.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The city also recognizes that a Cultural Plan, like any work of art, starts as an idea in the mind of a creator but only realizes its impact once shared with an audience. We therefore welcome the public's feedback and look forward to continued conversation after the plan's release. What we do individually and collectively to bring the story in these pages to life is in our hands. Most importantly, we want YOU to become part of the story by joining us in celebrating the diversity of talent our city offers and by sharing loudly and proudly what makes our city great.

**A plan is not the end of the story;
it is the beginning.**

DEIA-B STATEMENT

The City of Pittsfield centers Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Acceptance, and Belonging (DEIA-B) at the heart of this cultural plan. We recognize that there are people in our community who, because of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, income, nationality, immigration status, religion, or sexual orientation, as examples, may have felt unwelcome or unsafe in community spaces, including ones connected to arts and culture. We strive to change that experience for our fellow residents and visitors, and proudly state that **ALL ARE WELCOME** in our city's creative spaces. We recommit to ensuring that art and culture in Pittsfield reflect our community's dynamic, multicultural spirit and that our creative landscape mirrors the best of what our city can be.



MISSION

The Pittsfield Cultural Plan's mission is threefold:

- Restore civic pride by fostering a diverse arts and culture landscape in which all feel welcome and included.
- Nurture residents' individual and collective ability to express themselves creatively.
- Recognize and support artists and arts organizations as resources that enhance the community socially, emotionally, and economically.

The city believes creativity is essential to the human spirit, and everyone has a basic need and right to access and enjoy the arts.

The city also acknowledges that while the Cultural Plan's primary audiences are our residents, artists, and arts organizations, our actions can positively impact those beyond the city's boundaries.

City of Pittsfield Residents, Artists, and Arts Organizations: The city and its partners will use the arts and culture to reimagine our trajectory from one of past harms to future success. Through the power of art and culture, we will actualize a brighter present for our residents, artists, and arts organizations, and set the stage for a more vibrant future that showcases our city's unique creative voices.

Our Neighbors in Berkshire County: The city and its partners will welcome those in surrounding towns to celebrate arts and culture with us, making it easier for them to find, share, and participate in our creative vitality.

Visitors and Artists Outside the County: The city and its partners will promote our arts and cultural traditions for people outside our region, demonstrating our commitment to diverse voices by inviting artists & visitors from places farther away.

SMART GOALS

To realize the Cultural Plan's mission, the city of Pittsfield and its partners will focus on specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-sensitive (SMART) goals:

Restore civic pride and foster a creative landscape in which all feel welcome:

- Increase the Accessibility, Affordability, and Welcoming Nature of the Arts and Culture for All.
- Support Multi-Modal Ways for People to Reach Cultural Experiences Through Walking, Biking, Public Transit, and Car.
- Create Cultural Branding through Collaborative Wayfinding (i.e., Signage and Marketing that Helps People Better Locate and Enjoy Arts and Cultural Organizations.

Nurture and support individual and collective creative expression:

- Expand Arts Integration in Public Schools and Social Service Organizations to Benefit Youth – Our Future Creators.
- Provide Opportunities for Neighborhood-Based Creative Expression.

Recognize and support artists and arts organizations as resources that enhance the community socially, emotionally, and economically:

- Help Berkshire Artists and Arts Organizations Increase the Range of Ways They Earn Income to Ensure Their Sustainability.
- Support Artists in Finding and Securing Affordable Living and Working Spaces .

These goals evolved through a collaborative process informed by input from the Steering Committee, Artist Liaisons, community stakeholders, and residents.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase I

PHASE I: FORMING A STEERING COMMITTEE

The process leading to consensus around the mission and goals began in September 2023, when representatives from the four *Our Town* grantee organizations met for the first time to discuss their hopes for the Cultural Plan. The four grantees included:

- The Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development
- Downtown Pittsfield, Inc.
- Berkshire Black Economic Council, Organizer of the Berkshire Black Arts Council
- Berkshires Tomorrow, *the nonprofit arm* of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

In their initial meetings, the four organizations representatives discussed the arts and cultural partners they felt could best contribute to a Steering Committee to guide the planning process from start to finish. These organizations would contribute ideas about how to strengthen the city's arts and culture ecosystem and identify barriers that prevent audiences from participating in their work. The organizations they felt would be most appropriate are listed below:

- Barrington Stage Company
- Berkshire County Historical Society - Arrowhead
- Berkshire Museum
- Berkshire Music School
- Berkshire Theatre Group at the Colonial Theatre
- Hancock Shaker Village
- Pittsfield Public Schools

To ensure the Plan captured the perspectives of not only arts organizations but also individual artists and residents, Pittsfield's Office of Cultural Development put out a call for "Artist Liaisons" on its Love Pittsfield website. The city sought artists who could represent their ward at Steering Committee meetings and help with community outreach.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase I

The artists selected through an open call were:

Visual Artists Ohinene Asilijoe – Wards 1 & 2, Michael Carty – Ward 6 & 7, Elizabeth Heller – Ward 3 & 4, Jesse Tobin McCauley – Ward 3 & 4, Peter Vacchini – Ward 2, Dancer Luana Dias David – Ward 5

Once assembled, organizational representatives and Artist Liaisons began meeting nearly every month from October 2023 to May 2025, with individuals from new arts organizations, faith-based institutions, and public schools joining as their schedules allowed. Early meetings focused on brainstorming ideas for what the cultural plan could achieve and ideas for potential outcomes. The chart below summarizes outcomes the Steering Committee wanted to achieve and the categories under which they fall.

Desired Outcome	Outcome Category	Desired Outcome	Outcome Category
Move the Berkshire Historical Society to downtown Pittsfield.	Accessibility	Ensure arts and culture programming promotion reaches both full-time residents and summer visitors.	Branding/Marketing
Ensure youth have easy and affordable access to the arts within walking or biking distance of the neighborhoods where they live.	Accessibility, Affordability	Get Pittsfield on more regional and national "Best of" lists and raise the status of Pittsfield in the public's mind as an arts/culture center.	Branding/Marketing
Pilot eye-catching public transit to the arts, such as a trolley.	Accessibility, Transportation	Consider adopting a "We live here" or "We create here" marketing campaign to promote affordable artist housing and ensure artists living here now are not priced out.	Housing
Connect the arts, people, dining, and an island/center connection point to improve the downtown navigational experience.	Accessibility, Wayfinding	Help organizations identify financial resources that will cover artists' fees and increase programmatic and staff impact.	Sustainability
Re-activate a TKTs booth downtown offering discounted day-of-event tickets.	Affordability		
Create affordable artist housing for year-round and seasonal-only/visiting creatives.	Affordability, Housing		
Embed the arts more actively in public schools to support youth's intellectual and social/emotional development.	Arts Education		
Help arts organizations collaborate more efficiently and effectively around branding/marketing to strengthen their separate capacities.	Branding/Marketing		
Better define the Pittsfield brand for the public. Consider calling it the "Brooklyn of the North."	Branding/Marketing		

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase I

Outcome Categories in Order of Importance:

ACCESSIBILITY	4
BRANDING/MARKETING	4
AFFORDABILITY	3
HOUSING	2
ARTS EDUCATION	1
SUSTAINABILITY	1
TRANSPORTATION	1
WAYFINDING	1

The Steering Committee also identified organizations in non-arts sectors that they wanted involved in the planning process. Among them were:

1Berkshire	Mastheads
18 Degrees	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Berkshire Athenaeum	(MCLA) Students
Berkshire Community College	Multicultural BRIDGE
Berkshire Family YMCA	NuArts
Blackshires	Pittsfield Cultural Council
Boys & Girls Club of the Berkshires	Pittsfield Department of Diversity,
Clock Tower Artists	Equity, and Inclusion
Downtown Pittsfield Cultural Association	Pittsfield Commission on Disabilities
Economic Development Partners	Roots, Dreams, + Mustard Seeds
Faith-Based Leaders	Team R3SET
Latinas413	Westside Legends
Lichtenstein Artists	

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase II

PHASE II: DEVELOPING A LOGIC MODEL

In the next phase of its work, the Steering Committee took its initial set of outcomes and explained how they would address specific challenges they or the community faced, a process known as creating a Logic Model.* The Indiana Youth Institute defines a Logic Model as “an organized and visual way to display your understanding of the relationships among the resources you have to operate your program, the activities you plan, and the changes or results you hope to achieve.”

The section below lays out the Logic Model the Steering Committee created. In this phase, members modified their desired outcomes if they could not demonstrate that they addressed real-world problems.

LOGIC MODEL

WHAT ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES THE CULTURAL PLAN HOPES TO ADDRESS?

Past economic injuries that have affected new and established residents’ ability to feel a sense of civic and cultural pride, despite recent revitalization efforts.

A lack of affordable housing, including for artists and creative staff, which make it hard for organizations to attract and retain full-time and seasonal talent.

Cultural barriers such as high ticket prices, lack of childcare, time, transportation, and awareness, as well as a perception that events are “unwelcoming” or “not for me,” which reduce local attendance.

Limited staff and resources that affect organizations’ ability to coordinate mutually beneficial activities, from wayfinding to branding/marketing, which contribute to a confusing audience experience.

Low salaries and incomes for arts professionals creating challenges to their building economic stability and/or sustainable careers and businesses.

*Source: https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/leo/Folder20/Developing_a_Logic_Model_Guidex.pdf?rev=d4c120d3afc248e98404450806b4db30

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase II

WHAT ARE THE KEY INPUTS (PEOPLE, RESOURCES, ETC.) THAT CAN HELP ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

Historical economic injury affecting civic and cultural pride // INPUTS: (in alphabetical order):

1Berkshire, Berkshire Black Economic Council, Blackshires, Business Owners, City of Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, City of Pittsfield Office of Business Development, City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development, Downtown Pittsfield Inc., Funders (e.g., Berkshire Taconic, Mill Town Capital, Bank Foundations, Berkshire United Way)

Lack of “arts-oriented” full-time and seasonal housing // INPUTS:

1Berkshire, Arts Organizations, Artspace, City of Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, City of Pittsfield Office of Business Development, City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development, Downtown Pittsfield Inc., Funders (e.g., Berkshire Taconic, Mill Town Capital, Bank Foundations, Berkshire United Way), Homeowners, Hoteliers, Housing Nonprofits, Mass Cultural Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Real Estate Developers

Barriers to cultural participation // INPUTS:

1Berkshire, Arts Organizations, Berkshares, Berkshire Athenaeum, Berkshire Black Economic Council, Berkshire Regional Transportation Authority, Blackshires, City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development, City of Pittsfield Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Downtown Pittsfield Inc., Faith-Based Institutions, Funders, MassBike, Mass Cultural Council, Pittsfield Community Design Center, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Small Businesses, Social Service Organizations, Tri-Town Connector

Lack of coordination among creative institutions // INPUTS:

1Berkshire, Arts Organizations, Berkshire Community College, City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development, Downtown Pittsfield Inc., Funders, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Pittsfield Cultural Council

Low artist/creative income // INPUTS:

1Berkshire, Arts Organizations, Berkshire Community College, City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development, Downtown Pittsfield Inc., Funders, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Pittsfield Cultural Council, Small Businesses (Restaurants/Bars/Hotels)

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase II

WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN THE CULTURAL PLAN RECOMMEND TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES?

Historical economic injury affecting civic and cultural pride (Branding/Marketing, Sustainability)

- Celebrate local artists and arts organizations with a public relations campaign.
- Engage local “heroes” and “champions” to promote the arts to their neighbors on social media.
- Analyze positive social media posts to determine those that reach the widest audience and have the most “likes” and “shares.”
- Connect more arts organizations and professional artists with public school youth interested in arts careers through mentorship and internship opportunities so they can more easily visualize a path to their creative success.

Lack of “arts-oriented” full-time and seasonal housing (Housing)

- Engage ArtSpace as an artist housing consultant.
- Identify unused and underutilized city-owned lots and buildings that are feasible for development.
- Host a design competition to attract regional architects to develop housing concepts.
- Seek development funds through Community One Stop, MassDevelopment, the Executive Office of Housing Development, and philanthropic sources.

Barriers to cultural participation (Accessibility, Affordability, Branding/Marketing, Transportation)

- Review the Pittsfield Cultural Plan Survey to identify significant barriers in order of importance.
- Work with organizations that engage hard-to-reach audiences to promote the arts and share resources that address barriers.
- Work with Berkshire Regional Transportation Authority, Tritown Connector in Great Barrington, and non-traditional and volunteer transportation programs.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase II

(RSVP, MassBike) to identify creative ways to address transportation.

- Create a marketing campaign with local “heroes” and “champions” to address real and perceived barriers.
- Distribute arts events across neighborhoods’ public spaces, such as parks, to make access easier.
- Add a youth voice to the city’s arts programming and foster youth-centered spaces within walking or biking distance of downtown.

Lack of coordination among creative institutions (Branding/Marketing, Sustainability, Wayfinding)

- Continue monthly meetings of the Steering Committee to foster ongoing cooperation.
- Identify a funder that arts organizations and the city could jointly approach to develop wayfinding.
- Survey visitors about their experiences navigating downtown Pittsfield during the summer high season to inform wayfinding and branding/marketing strategies.

Low artist/creative income (Affordability, Sustainability)

- Organize an annual networking event to connect artists and arts organizations around resource-sharing.
- Host a workshop to help artists learn to use the Berkshire Athenaeum’s Candid database to find grants.
- Explore encouraging a standardized rate for artists who perform in downtown businesses and create a competition to find performers.
- Explore a volunteer-led Porchfest event to bring greater attention to local creatives.



CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase II

WHO ARE THE KEY PEOPLE THE PLAN NEEDS TO REACH?

Historical economic injury affecting civic and cultural pride

BIPOC/DEI Organizations
City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development
City of Pittsfield Cultural Council
Downtown Pittsfield Inc.
Pittsfield artists
Pittsfield leaders across sectors (nonprofit and for-profit)
Pittsfield residents, especially youth

Lack of “arts-oriented” full-time and seasonal housing

Architects
Builders/Contractors
City of Pittsfield Cultural Council
City of Pittsfield Cultural Development
Downtown Pittsfield Inc.
Homeowners
Land Trusts
Philanthropies (Funders)
Pittsfield artists
Pittsfield arts organizations
Real estate developers

Barriers to cultural participation

BIPOC/DEI Organizations
City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development
City of Pittsfield Cultural Council
Downtown Pittsfield Inc.
Pittsfield arts organizations
Pittsfield residents
Social service organizations

Lack of coordination among creative institutions

City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development
City of Pittsfield Cultural Council
Downtown Pittsfield Inc.
Philanthropies (Funders)
Pittsfield arts organizations

Limited artist/creative income

Artists
BIPOC/DEI Organizations
City of Pittsfield Cultural Council
City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development
Downtown Pittsfield Inc.
Pittsfield arts organizations
Residents
Small business owners

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase III

PHASE III: LEADERSHIP CONVENING

On February 28, 2024, after working on the Logic Model over a series of months, the Steering Committee invited a larger group of community leaders to gather for a convening at the Colonial Theatre. The Committee sought to use the event to share their work to date with this broader constituency of stakeholders and gather feedback from them before conducting public outreach. The group sent invitations to representatives from cultural, social service, faith-based, and civic organizations. Those who attended, including Steering Committee members, community stakeholders and Artist Liaisons.

During the convening, attendees split into breakout groups with each including a representative from a different sector: arts and culture, business, social service, and religion. Each group was asked to rank the Priority Outcomes that the Steering Committee arrived at in order of importance. Groups were also invited to add new outcomes if they felt an issue had been overlooked.



OUTCOME

Groups at the convening recommended organizations focus first on cultural accessibility and DEIA-B training to ensure they were welcoming to people within and outside the organization. They felt that speaking to community members directly to learn more about their needs could be a key strategy to do this. Groups said it was essential to help organizations and artists find money to expand their DEIA-B work, noting many lack information about how to apply for grants or find donors.

Groups also felt it was important to emphasize how the arts attract people and businesses to the city and wanted more done to leverage culture to inform the city's revitalization. They felt outcomes should build upon one another rather than being separate and independent.



CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase IV

PHASE IV: COMMUNITY INPUT SURVEY

After the leadership convening, the Steering Committee, with new attendees joining, continued meeting monthly, circulating among sites to better understand the working conditions and challenges their peer organizations faced. In parallel, the committee re-examined whether the mission and outcomes they had proposed during early, internal discussions mirrored or diverged from those identified by convening attendees.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING LOCATIONS

BARRINGTON STAGE

BERKSHIRE ART CENTER

BERKSHIRE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BERKSHIRE MUSEUM

LICHTENSTEIN CENTER FOR THE ARTS

After reviewing cultural plans from across the country, the Steering Committee transitioned from internal discussions to external-facing public outreach. As a first step, they developed a Cultural Plan Survey, written in plain language and limited to no more than 20 questions to ensure accessibility. They then had the survey translated into Spanish and Portuguese to encourage participation from those for whom English is not their first language.

The city released the Cultural Plan Survey in June 2024, sharing it on the Love Pittsfield website and social media (Instagram, Facebook). Artist Liaisons encouraged people to take the survey during First Friday Artswalk and Berkshire Pride while Steering Committee members shared it on their organizations' websites. In February 2025, Barrington Stage Company publicized the survey during its *10 x 10 New Play Festival*. Submissions to the survey closed at the end of March 2025.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase IV

PITTSFIELD CULTURAL PLAN WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

PLAN CULTURAL DE PITTSFIELD ¡QUEREMOS SABER DE TI!

PLANO CULTURAL DE PITTSFIELD. QUEREMOS OUVIR VOCÊ!

In total, 389 English, 21 Spanish, and 3 Portuguese speakers completed the survey; 75% were Pittsfield residents. Respondents ranged in age from 16 to over 75; a concerted effort was made to include youth voices (22.2% of survey takers).

Respondents skewed slightly female (57.8%) versus male (34.8%) and non-binary (2.4%). Just over 35% of survey respondents reported having a disability, the majority related to mental, social, or emotional health.

Mirroring the city's racial and ethnic makeup, most survey respondents were white or Caucasian (71%). However, Hispanic survey takers (16.4%) and Black/African-Americans (9.1%) also participated in numbers matching their share of Pittsfield's population.

The survey addressed the following topics:

Connection to Culture

Artist Challenges

Arts Venues Visited

Feeling Welcome and Included at Arts Organizations

Barriers to Arts Participation

Memorable Experiences

Arts Accessibility and Affordability

Arts Participation - Artist and Audience Member/Consumer

To view all survey results, see appendices at LovePittsfield.com

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase IV

One of the noteworthy questions on the survey was **“Name an arts, creative, or cultural event in Pittsfield that made them feel good or was especially memorable?”** The chart below summarizes the responses. People’s responses suggest that free outdoor community-wide events such as First Fridays Artswalk, Third Thursday, and Berkshire Pride are the most popular with the public, while traditional sites like museums find it harder to connect with audiences emotionally.

Memorable Experiences	English-Speaking Responses
Community Events (Art Walk, First Fridays, Third Thursdays, Farmer's Market, One City/One Book, Fourth of July Parade)	29
Barrington Stage (10 x 10; <i>La Cage Aux Folles</i>)	24
Colonial Theater (Young Frankenstein; Million Dollar Quartet, Paula Poundstone)	13
Berkshire Concert Choir	12
Berkshire Pride	12
Art @ Restaurant or Bar (Paint and Pint @ Thistle & Mirth; Dottie's; Hot Plate)	10
Murals (Vietnam Vets, Let it Shine!)	10
Beacon Cinema and Movies	8
Other (Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park, Christmas Lights, Windows at Soda Chef, Seniors Acting Up!, BCC Inmate Show, Pittsfield City Hoopla, Faces of Pittsfield, Poetry Reading at Otto's)	8
PHS art show, theater performance, or concert	7
Arrowhead	6
Jacob's Pillow in Pittsfield	5
Berkshire Museum (Shorts before Oscars; Art of the Hills; Biennial)	5
Clocktower Artists	5
Lichtenstein Center	5
Art Shows/Studios (Nu Studios, Studios on North/North Street Arts Collaborative, Storefront Artist Project)	4
Berkshire Art Center	4
Jazz (Pittsfield Jazz Festival, Jazz at restaurants, Jazz Prodigy Concert)	3
Berkshire Children's Concerts	3
Juneteenth	3
Berkshire Athenaeum show/event (Clubs, Friends events, Cinema of Law)	2
Hancock Shaker Village	2
Events outside Pittsfield (Fairy Festival, Mahaiwe Theater)	2
Berkshire Lyric	2

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase IV

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

When respondents were asked if there was anything else about the arts scene in Pittsfield they wanted to share, people did not hesitate to reply.

Pittsfield is built upon the arts.

Más eventos latinos.

The more arts and colorful murals around the town/city the better it will feel and inspire those who are in it contributing to a more creative, harmonious peaceful place.

I would love to see more local community theatre opportunities. I know we have a wealth of professional producing organizations that mostly pull in talent from far away. But I believe that can exist alongside smaller theatres that showcase local talent.

More opportunities for youth artists to get funded or meet up and bounce ideas off each other.

Gracias por hacer esta encuesta.

I'm 73 but I feel there needs to be more for teens and young adults. Most activities seem to appeal to young children and older adults.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase IV

“I would like to see more collaboration to foster fledging or new arts groups. It can feel difficult to get opportunities to work in the arts in Pittsfield. There is a model where space is offered free in exchange for a percentage of the ticket income. But I don't know if there are and theatre companies trying to start up here either.”

“Uplifting OUR local artists and giving a stage and opportunity to collaborate for the betterment of our community and youth.”

“More free family friendly events”

“The only thing that's keeping me from participating more is my lack of time and transportation. I hope to help promote cultural events in Pittsfield even if I can't attend them myself.”

“It would be great to showcase more the creativity (music, visual art, dance, cuisine, etc.) of the diverse cultures in our community.”

“Tener en cuenta la diversidad de comunidades”

“Representation matters. Storytelling matters. There's a stigma against Pittsfield in this county that is very defeating—stigma around violence/unsafe streets/pedestrian safety. It would be amazing to work on addressing these narratives for Pittsfield and Berkshire communities through the arts!”

“There needs to be more accessible space for artists who paint, namely studio space or gallery space in which to exhibit.”

In summary, the survey provided a comprehensive picture of the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities that face Pittsfield's Office of Cultural Development and the city's arts partners as they look to provide a well-rounded selection of events and activities that are affordable, accessible, welcoming, and engaging. People generally like what is being offered culturally in Pittsfield but want more of it. They also want better communication about the Who, What, When, and Where about cultural happenings and need to know that they will be within their budget and happen at a time and place that they can accommodate.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase V

PHASE V: CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS & BUSINESS SURVEY

In parallel to the Cultural Plan Survey, Berkshires Tomorrow created a second survey for small business owners, arts organization leaders, individual artists, and faith-based institutions to assess their needs as arts promoters. This survey, released in September 2024 and closed at the end of February 2025, was completed by 50 participants. The survey revealed that organizations and businesses have been successful in making arts and culture accessible to the public through free programs, volunteer opportunities, scholarships, and accepting EBT Card to Culture. They are also well-connected to First Fridays Artswalk and the Mass. Cultural Council, but less so to ArtWeek Berkshires, a newer endeavor (5 years), or Creative Ground, a project of the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) that serves as a regional directory for creative people and places. Grants, marketing, and hiring staff/staff capacity rank as top challenges for organizations. From a branding/marketing perspective, arts and business promoters are active on traditional social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram) but rarely use YouTube as a marketing tool.



CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase VI

PHASE VI: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging community members in conversation and listening sessions was always central to the planning process. This section describes how the Steering Committee interacted with the public to gather their stories.

TILE MURAL PROJECT

Early on, Steering Committee members felt strongly that, besides surveying residents and visitors, the plan should result in a community artistic project to let people contribute hands-on to the vision of what Pittsfield's cultural landscape could be.

Through deep discussions over several months, Steering Committee members also identified that the community project should promote healing and restore good feelings about the city. This was heard repeatedly in conversations: a negative image of Pittsfield due to its history of economic decline and environmental degradation, which contributed to the city's difficulty reasserting itself as a positive place to live.

To counteract this negative perception – one contradicted by decades of work by city leaders to use the arts and culture to improve the city's reputation – one Steering Committee member, sculptor Peter Vacchina, offered to take the lead in realizing a community mural composed of tiles that could be placed in a prominent location as a symbol of community pride.

The project involved securing tile donations from Berkshire Habitat for Humanity's ReStore, breaking them into pieces, then having people decorate each tile with their name or an image to honor their place in the city's landscape. Steering Committee members and Artist Liaisons helped collect tiles over several months by tabling at well-attended community events. In total, they collected just over 200 tiles, and the mural, with a heart theme, will be installed at an entry kiosk at the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail.



CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase VI

BIPOC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

To engage BIPOC youth, the city contracted with the agency Team R3SET to conduct an “Id3a Jam.” This event, which took place at Barrington Stage, involved focused conversations and interviews with 10 BIPOC youth ages 12 to 18. Responses were well-distributed, suggesting active engagement across multiple areas. Some questions, such as “What would you want from your dream community?” received as many as 37 responses, indicating significant interest in that topic. The whole Team R3set report is in the Appendix. The section below pulls out the key themes and recommendations Team R3SET identified:

KEY THEMES

Community Engagement & Preferences

- Participants frequently mentioned enjoying places like Jacob’s Pillow, Tanglewood, and local farmers’ markets.
- Specific events or artists, such as Ice Spice and Billie Eilish, were named, indicating a preference for well-known and current performers.

Challenges

- Common obstacles include transportation, financial constraints, and lack of time, emphasizing barriers that prevent youth from participating in cultural activities.
- Shyness or discomfort in social settings was also noted, suggesting the need for inclusive and welcoming environments.

Sources of Inspiration

- Social media platforms, especially TikTok and Instagram, are significant sources of creative inspiration for these youth, pointing towards digital engagement opportunities.
- Natural spaces like parks and lakes also serve as sources of inspiration, reflecting the importance of outdoor and community spaces.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase VI

Cultural and Creative Aspirations

- There was strong interest in diverse and inclusive art classes, like those teaching about different cultures, ensemble training, or musical and dance classes.
- Participants expressed a desire for community spaces adorned with colorful, artistic features that feel vibrant and engaging.

Information Access & Awareness

- Youth hear about events through family members, social media, and word of mouth, highlighting the need to effectively leverage these channels for outreach.

These insights can guide strategies for improving cultural accessibility, planning future events, and creating a more engaging and inclusive cultural environment.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve Accessibility and Inclusivity

- **Transportation Solutions:** Partner with local transit authorities to provide discounted or free transportation for youth to attend cultural events.
- **Financial Support:** To reduce financial barriers, offer scholarships or subsidized tickets for cultural events and art classes.

Leverage Popular Platforms and Influencers

- **Social Media Campaigns:** Promote cultural events using platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Engage with local youth influencers to increase visibility and excitement.
- **Interactive Content:** Create relatable and engaging content, such as behind-the-scenes tours, artist spotlights, or short clips from live performances.

Create Welcoming Cultural Spaces

- **Artistic and Colorful Community Areas:** Design spaces with vibrant murals and installations that invite interaction, reflecting the desire for visually engaging environments.
- **Safe and Inclusive Environments:** Foster a sense of belonging by offering workshops and events that prioritize comfort and inclusivity and address concerns of shyness or social discomfort.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase VI

Expand Art and Cultural Education

- **Diverse Art Classes:** Introduce classes that cover a variety of creative interests, such as multicultural dance, studio setup basics, and instrument lessons.
- **Collaborate with Schools:** Work with educational institutions to integrate these offerings, making them more accessible and relevant to youth.

Maximize Word-of-Mouth Promotion

- **Community Ambassadors:** Engage local youth as cultural ambassadors to spread awareness within their networks, especially through schools and extracurricular groups.
- **Family-Centric Events:** Organize activities that appeal to youth and their families, ensuring a supportive and familiar environment.

Enhance Outdoor and Natural Spaces

- **Art in Nature:** Organize art events in parks or other outdoor locations, combining the love for nature with creative expression.
- **Seasonal Cultural Jams:** Host seasonal events that align with outdoor activities, using local landscapes for inspiration.

These recommendations aim to make cultural experiences more accessible, engaging, and reflective of the BIPOC youth community's desires and needs.



CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase VI

PITTSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

BRPC staff also spent a day with Pittsfield High School students, sharing the Community Input Survey and speaking to them about their experiences engaging with arts and culture within and outside school. BRPC staff sat in on theater, art, English, and music classes and talked with students about how they use art and what they want to see in Pittsfield's arts and culture scene to make it youth-friendly.

In the theater program, students wished they had more performance spaces to rehearse and perform. They were upset that the tech department had been terminated in the past year, and work reassigned to Taconic High School. They felt this led to less camaraderie between backstage tech students and performers, which they missed. This change also led to sets being simpler and, therefore, less interesting.

Arts students enjoyed working in a light-filled studio. Still, few participated in art classes outside of school. Barriers such as lack of transportation, money, and, for many, lack of awareness. Few students knew about the Love Pittsfield website or that they could get free passes to museums and shows through the Berkshire Athenaeum.

Students in an English class were involved in a collaborative film project with the Berkshire Film and Media Collaborative, which many were excited about. However, it was still a new endeavor, and its impact had not yet been measured.

Across all classes, students expressed frustration at what they perceived as a lack of things to do creatively in Pittsfield, with few knowing about events they could participate in, such as First Friday Artswalk or ArtWeek Berkshires. Some students mentioned wishing Pittsfield offered a place they could go, like Calliope Cafe at the Stationery Factory in Dalton, a once-monthly open mic for high school students. Many felt Pittsfield lacked a "third space" or "hang out" spot, with some mentioning Barnes and Noble or chain restaurants as the only places they could go socially outside of school or home. Some acknowledged spending free time at home online, playing video games, or connecting with friends on social media rather than going out. The COVID-19 pandemic loomed large for many, leading to a withdrawal from outside activities that remained.

The general impression students conveyed was one of desire and confusion. They both wanted to be more creatively connected to their city but did not know where or how to start or who to go to for creative mentorship.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase VI

ADULT FOCUS GROUPS

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission/Berkshires Tomorrow staff also conducted focus groups with adults whose participation in the arts is vital to personal healing: people who have previously been incarcerated and people in recovery from substance abuse.

2ND STREET, SECOND CHANCES

(FEBRUARY - MEN'S GROUP / APRIL - WOMEN'S GROUP)

BRPC held two focus groups at 2nd Street, Second Chances, a nonprofit that works with formerly incarcerated individuals. One group included six men in their mid-20s to 50s, and the other five women in their 20s to 40s. Staff also participated in both conversations. In both groups, participants shared powerful stories of using art for healing.

Men's Group

“Music saved my life.”

Nearly everyone in the Men's Group had been involved in the arts at some point. One person had done collage and painting while at a VA hospital and kept the paintings as a testament to that time. Another had done tagging and graffiti as a teenager and spoke about learning to draw by tracing comic book art; this person was also in an a cappella group in high school and enjoyed performing. Many spoke of using music as a form of emotional comfort. One person used hip hop, rap, and freestyle as unique sources of support. One participant talked about the power of seeing his and other formerly incarcerated people's lives depicted on stage through a theater program that paired them with actors who role-played their stories. This person liked the performance but noted that he had never been to The Colonial Theatre, one of Pittsfield's most iconic cultural settings. One person had seen an improv show in the North End of Boston and liked it.

The men learned about cultural offerings mostly by seeing signs and posters in store windows. About half the group was active on Facebook, and the other half on Instagram, and used those platforms to learn what was happening around town.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase VI

The men suggested that promoting information at the library, churches, or on the sides of public buses would be helpful, as all three locations would ensure that it was seen by people who want to participate in the arts but may be unaware of free and low-cost options. Two people had cars. No one had a bike. Many walked.

In terms of learning creative skills, one person wanted to learn tattoo arts, another digital computer skills, and a third music editing software. One suggested entrepreneurial classes with a creative bent for people after incarceration. This person shared that in a former life, he and his uncle had an idea to make flower boxes that could be hung in public places, but that they would need money and support to get their business off the ground. Another used to work as an electrician and could see transitioning into audio and sound production, if he could be taught the skills.

Women's Group

“We have a big recovery community. People don't feel comfortable with nighttime events.”

In the women's group, conversation focused as much on children as on the women's own connection to the arts. Many expressed a desire for arts and creative activities to happen at family-friendly times (i.e., not at night) and in safe locations closer to where they lived (e.g., near Christian Center). Some noted that even parts of the Common, such as the area near the playground, did not always feel safe (e.g., needles on the ground or teenagers congregating). One suggested bringing the Berkshire Carousel closer to the Common to encourage more children and families to be there. Many noted a lack of transportation as a concern; another reason they preferred arts activities to be held during the day and in walkable locations.

Some felt North Street, even during First Friday Artswalk, was triggering because such a large event attracts negative people and activities. Others suggested the event extend further down North Street, closer to the hospital, to activate a part of the street with more negative activity, closer to the A-Mart and Dollar Store.

CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase VI

Women suggested a desire for sober events and locations suitable for those in recovery. For example, they were eager to see Coffee and Create versus Paint and Sip.

As in the men's group, many women made art when they were younger, from playing in bands in school to writing poetry. As parents, they wanted arts engagement to be less expensive and thus more accessible. One noted how costly it was to rent instruments for her kids for school. She suggested kids be allowed to try out and borrow instruments for free before committing to one, like offering a lending library.

Few of the participants had attended arts events at public places in the last year. Of the events they remembered fondly, shows at The Colonial, such as the Youth Alive Dance Festival and Black Voices, stood out. Another enjoyed Wanda Houston at Barrington Stage. None of the women knew their EBT card gave them free and low-cost entry to arts events across the city and county. They suggested better promoting that benefit through the Department of Transition Assistance, where people get their EBT cards.

The women favored events with a cross-cultural theme, like the Latino Festival in Great Barrington, and felt multicultural food and food trucks generally were a strong draw. One had fond memories of an event that involved participants being given a passport and collecting stamps as they went around to different tables. They also suggested that more events offer a Pay-What-You-Can model to reduce income as a barrier.

Regarding class subjects, the women were most excited about cartooning, sculpture, photography, music, embroidery, dance, and music. They suggested arts classes piggyback on recovery groups and occur in the same locations, immediately preceding or following groups, to have a captive audience. Whether regarding events or classes, women felt safer with smaller and more intimate experiences rather than larger ones that had greater potential to include triggering people and experiences.



CULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Phase VI

LIVING IN RECOVERY

“We’re not professional marketers. I advertise on social media but want to tap into the right audience and develop a collector following.”

Four men and women participated in the focus group at Living in Recovery, a nonprofit on North Street that supports people overcoming addiction. Some were long-time Pittsfield residents, others were new to the community. All had been actively involved in the arts throughout their lives; some had pursued professional arts careers, others had used art therapeutically as part of their recovery journey. One was looking to become an art therapist.

These participants were all deeply engaged in creative work and wanted information and support to promote themselves better. Visibility was a key theme. For example, one person had submitted work to local galleries and the Berkshire Museum, but had been rejected. This person understood they needed to learn to withstand rejection, but wanted feedback about what they could do better in the future and direction about connecting with the right collectors and buyers who might appreciate their work.

Social media was critical to this audience, and they used platforms like Facebook and Instagram to market themselves. Still, many held multiple jobs and were itinerant in their living situations. These artists would be ideal candidates for affordable artist housing, as most had long resumes making art, but could not yet show a long sales history.

The Living in Recovery staff, who were also in attendance, needed help promoting the agency and its events. They run an open mic that is welcoming to all, not only those in recovery, but few outside the community know about it. They also felt that more artists in the community could benefit from their services, but needed to know who to connect with to share information. For their artist clients, an aspirational goal was helping them show work in more prominent places like the Berkshire Museum or MassMOCA, the way some museums set aside rooms for local artists to be displayed alongside prominent figures (e.g., The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Lyman Allyn Art Museum in Connecticut). Participants noted that there is still a stigma about recovery that makes it hard for them to be taken seriously professionally as artists or, more concerning, that audiences avoid them because of the negative connotation recovery might imply. Some, for example, might not bring children to see work done by “addicts.” In contrast, the group felt they could offer unique guidance to at-risk teens by serving as creative mentors and showing them how to use the arts to heal and grow. As one participant noted, “We have survived something most people have not.”

CONCLUSIONS

The Cultural Plan concludes with recommendations for specific actions the city and its partners can take to enhance Pittsfield's status as the arts and cultural hub of Berkshire County for the benefit of all.

The recommendations are based on the lived experiences of arts leaders, artists, residents, and visitors, as well as those of stakeholders that use the arts for related purposes (i.e., social service, religious, businesses).

Restore civic pride and foster a creative landscape in which all feel welcome

GOAL 1: Increase the Accessibility, Affordability, and Welcoming Nature of Arts and Culture for All

Strategies to Achieve Goal:

- Create a central page on the Love Pittsfield website where residents and visitors can learn about reduced-price and day-of tickets to events and find volunteer opportunities (e.g., ushering at local venues).
- Better promote the availability of EBT's Card to Culture and free cultural passes at the library by partnering with the Department of Transition Assistance and nonprofits, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, and the public school system (e.g., Superintendent e-blast, Power School, Parent Squared).
- Build awareness among medical providers of Art Pharmacy so they can "prescribe" arts to clients.
- Pilot Pay-What-You-Can events and performances, preferably on weekends, to make it easier for low-income working adults, families with children, and youth to attend and better promote the discounted tickets to performances for young professionals (e.g., BTGY allows adults aged 18-30 to purchase one ticket to any Berkshire Theatre Group produced show for \$30 and BSC40 allows adults aged 18-40 to purchase two tickets to a Barrington Stage Company show for \$40/each).
- Look for ways to "activate" the portion of North Street closer to A-Mart, Carr Hardware, and Berkshire Medical Center with "creative placemaking" programming during First Fridays at Five to encourage positive public uses in an area with more dispersed street-level businesses.

CONCLUSIONS

- Encourage more outdoor dining on North Street during events and at other times in the summer.
- Create more family-friendly events in spaces that feel safe and hold them during the day rather than evening.
- Support sober events in spaces that are less triggering for people in recovery (e.g., WANDER Berkshires) and incorporate more arts and music into events aimed at people in recovery, such as Revel in Recovery and Stamp Out Stigma.
- Include “passport” stamps and foods of diverse cultures at community events to encourage people to explore beyond their familiar activities.
- Ensure the success of The Berkshire Carousel’s reactivation by supporting the volunteer group now leading its pilot this summer.
- Encourage the continuation of an annual show at The Berkshire Museum featuring Pittsfield and other local artists.

SAMPLE Non-Arts Organization partners: 2nd Street Second Chances, Berkshire Habitat for Humanity, Berkshire Medical Center, Berkshire Black Arts Council, Blackshires, BOAPC, Brien Center, Church of the Beloved, Crane Center, Department of Transition Assistance, Hearthway, Latinas413, Living in Recovery, Pittsfield Community TV, Pittsfield Cultural Council, Pittsfield Public Schools, Youth Advisory Board

GOAL 2: Support Multi-Modal Ways for People to Reach Cultural Experiences Through Walking, Biking, Public Transit, and Car

Strategies to Achieve Goal:

- Continue to promote the map of public art in downtown Pittsfield, now available on the Love Pittsfield website, to encourage people to take self-directed walking and bike tours to murals and/or art venues around the city.
- Organize with the Pittsfield Community Design Center a guided arts-oriented bike tour in collaboration with venues on dates when notable events are taking place (e.g., Berkshire Pride, First Fridays at Five, July 4th Parade).
- Encourage participation in volunteer, neighborhood-run, free, and low-cost walkable arts events such as ArtWeek Berkshires.

CONCLUSIONS

- Expand the BRTA program that allows service-by-request to Bousquet and Hancock Shaker Village to include more cultural sites such as Arrowhead, 18 Degrees, and Berkshire Community College. Include a reciprocal service-by-request pick-up option within a three-hour timeframe.
- Provide a dedicated bus to travel between Pittsfield cultural venues one weekend a month and promote it to youth and families with children (e.g., Hancock Shaker Village, Arrowhead, Bousquet, downtown).
- Pilot with Rainbow Cab or an on-demand service a reduced there-and-back “Share a Cab to Culture” rate if two parties share a ride both ways to a Pittsfield arts venue.
- Pilot a 10%-off discounted food or drink ticket to a local bar or restaurant if parties of three or more can show they carpooled to a show.
- Create better wayfinding to help those who drive more easily find parking.

GOAL 3: Create Cultural Branding through Collaborative Wayfinding (i.e., Signage) and Marketing that Helps People Better Locate and Enjoy Arts and Cultural Organizations

Strategies to Achieve Goal:

- Continue the planned rollout of wayfinding in downtown Pittsfield in summer 2025 that will include branded signs, maps, and a kiosk.
- Assess the impact of the wayfinding rollout with a public survey campaign in July, August, and September.
- Continue working with civic, arts, business, BIPOC, and youth organizations to brainstorm ideas for targeted cultural marketing, including a more robust and video-rich social media campaign aimed at hard-to-reach audiences.
- Pursue additional funding for wayfinding through the Mass Downtown Initiative and Community One-Stop.
- Create a design competition involving local artists to re-imagine Pittsfield imagery that could be used for posters or social media in a Phase II marketing/branding campaign.

SAMPLE Non-Arts Organization Partners: 1Berkshire, BBEC, Blackshires, EforAll, Latinas413, PERC, TDI

CONCLUSIONS

GOAL 4: Cultural bridge-building. Increase organizational and community training related to cultural accessibility and DEIA-B to ensure arts and culture organizations are welcoming and inclusive internally and externally.

Strategies to Achieve Goal:

- Work together to identify DEIA-B trainers outside of Berkshire County to help expand the pool of consultant candidates to lead the work.
- Use Pittsfield Public School's equity audit and findings to help guide discussions and training.

Nurture and support individual and collective creative expression

GOAL 1: Expand Arts Integration Within Public Schools and Social Service Organizations to Benefit Youth – Our Future Creators

Strategies to Achieve Goal:

- Ensure the Pittsfield public school superintendent, middle- and high-school principals, and middle- and high-school teachers are making full use of the arts-related career guidance and resources curated by MCLA Brainworks Career Readiness Guide. Evaluate efficacy through annual student and teacher surveys to ensure they are reaching students in meaningful ways.
- Encourage Pittsfield public schools and arts organizations to fully participate in MCLA Brainworks C4 Initiative, which aims to facilitate a cross-sector, collective impact initiative that maps arts learning to larger regional goals. See a list of current participating organizations here: <https://www.brainworks.mcla.edu/arts-culture-organization>.
- Pilot a brief (1- to 2-week) mentorship program that pairs professional local artists with high school students through a competitive application to attract students serious about careers in the arts. Explore with Berkshire Taconic Foundation dedicating funds to pay a stipend to mentors.
- Replicate in a dedicated location, such as Barrington Stage's Mr. Finn's Cabaret or Dottie's, the monthly youth open mic series now offered at Calliope Cafe in the Stationery Factory in Dalton.

CONCLUSIONS

- Continue the relationship between Berkshire Film Collaborative and Pittsfield High School to teach students in-demand film and videography skills. Explore having students create short social media videos for arts organizations.
- Recruit a high school student to serve as a member of the Pittsfield Cultural Council to better represent youth voices.
- Identify teen/youth cultural “ambassadors” to create social media aimed at building young people’s awareness of the Love Pittsfield website and arts-cultural offerings.
- Better promote and expand youth-focused or youth-only event nights at cultural venues and other performance spaces (e.g., WordXWord).
- Create an arts mentorship program between arts-focused students at BCC, MCLA, and Williams College and Pittsfield and Taconic High School students.
- Restore funding for the Coordinator for Arts Integration & Community Partnerships role within the Pittsfield Public School System to foster more robust relationships between public schools and arts organizations.
- Provide a way for low-income students to borrow musical instruments for free and try them out before their families have to pay and commit to an instrument, before their children are ready.

SAMPLE Non-Arts Organization Partners: 1Berkshire, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Berkshire Community College, Berkshire YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, MassHire, MCLA, Pittsfield Public School’s Superintendent’s Office

GOAL 2: Provide Opportunities for Neighborhood-Based Creative Expression

Strategies to Achieve Goal:

- Stage shows in neighborhood-based public spaces to reach audiences in places requiring little to no transportation, such as Pittsfield Skate Park, Wahconah Park, and Durant Park.
- Designate an Artist Liaison / Arts Ambassador for each Pittsfield ward who would help program a centrally located neighborhood park within walking distance of most residences.
- Encourage the creation of new volunteer-led events that foster neighborhood spirit, such as PorchFest.

SAMPLE Non-Arts Organization Partners: Christian Center, City of Pittsfield Parks Department, Framework, Ward Councillors

CONCLUSIONS

Recognize and support artists and arts organizations as resources that enhance the community socially, emotionally, and economically

GOAL 1: Help Berkshire Artists and Arts Organizations Increase the Range of Ways They Earn Income to Ensure Their Sustainability

Strategies to Achieve Goal:

- Recruit more artists and physicians to participate in Art Pharmacy to prescribe the arts to students in need and provide arts activities on-site at social service organizations and recovery programs.
- Find creative ways for artists to be brought in as contractors to assist with civic engagement projects to lend a unique perspective to problem-solving.
- Help more artists promote themselves on MCC's Creative Ground to expand awareness of their work. Once Creative Ground is well-populated, have the city list these artists and groups on the Love Pittsfield website using a customized API feed.
- Encourage BIPOC artists to list themselves with BBEC, Blackshires, and Latinas413.
- Ensure artists are aware of local and regional e-newsletters that post paid opportunities such as BCAN e-news, 1Berkshire's The Jobs Thing, ArtsHub of Western Mass, and HireCulture.
- Have the Berkshire Athenaeum lead periodic workshops to teach artists and arts organizations how to use the Candid grants funding database.
- Brainstorm with arts organizations about opportunities to market and promote their spaces for alternative uses that generate new sources of income.

SAMPLE Non-Arts Organization Partners: 1Berkshire, BBEC, Blackshires, EforAll, Latinas413, Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, Small Business Development Center

CONCLUSIONS

GOAL 2: Support Artists to Find and Secure Affordable Live, Work, and Performance Spaces

Strategies to Achieve Goal:

- Create a landing page on the Love Pittsfield website for artists where they can post jobs, housing shares, and space rentals.
- Identify vacant and under-utilized spaces that could be repurposed for pop-up performances and window arts.
- Help artists find homeowners interested in organizing “house concerts.”
- Build relationships with faith-based organizations currently offering arts and performance opportunities that have the potential to be expanded.
- Continue to identify state and philanthropic funding that would support permanent and seasonal affordable artist housing.
- Host an affordable artist housing day-long conference and invite regional developers and multi-state representatives who have completed artist housing to participate.

SAMPLE Non-Arts Organization Partners: 1Berkshire, BBEC, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Blackshires, Faith-Based Organizations, Hearthway, Milltown Capital, Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, Private Homeowners.





SPECIAL THANKS TO



For a full comprehensive Cultural Plan including resource links and appendices, go to **LovePittsfield.com** or call the City of Pittsfield's Office of Cultural Development 413-499-9348.