



**Community Foundation Arts, Culture and Creativity Initiative
Transcribed Post-It Notes from Fall River community gatherings –
June 13, 2017, at Children’s Museum of Greater Fall River and June 27, at The Narrows**

VISION – What does success look like?

Picture Fall River as a thriving, diverse, multicultural center for arts and creativity. What would it be like?

- A city where arts and culture are thriving – where young people as well as adults are working collaboratively – artists mentoring youth – center for young people like Artists for Humanity in Boston.
- A creative, vital “huburban hub” that attracts young college graduates to stay and raise families.
- Children and adults actively pursuing and engaged in artistic and creative endeavors (like singing groups, robotics clubs, dance lessons for kids and adults, acting groups)
- Arts and creativity in public schools, community events -- pop-up and annual -- recurring, reflective of our community and with funding to support it.
- Fall River would have: a huge performing arts center; grow The Narrows; a gallery with both a permanent collection and a rotating collection with local artists. (2)
- State-of-the-art performing arts theater (5)
- More art galleries,
- Multiple use outdoor performance venue / amphitheater for concerts, festivals, green space (5) (like the Boston Esplanade, but at Heritage Park)
- Vibrant Downtown with diverse venues featuring entertainment and arts that appeal and are accessible to many people. (3)
- A destination city: North Main Street, South Main St, Pleasant Street – walking friendly, safe, local shop owners, diversity music, theater
- Murals and sculpture displayed throughout the city.
- Diversity in the arts – dance, music, graphic design
- Schools with vibrant arts departments (2)
- After-School program for kids, connecting with Artists in Residence.
- Nonprofits working with schools to add programming – true partnership
- Clean and vibrant waterfront and downtown with a connectivity that is natural and creative.
- Waterfront District that draws people with its equally diverse entertainment – Battleship, Maritime Museum, Narrows, carousel, new restaurant (3).
- A thriving waterfront – commerce.
- Summer waterfront concerts
- A vibrant Fall River starts in the elementary schools, exposing all children to the arts, reaching out to diversify with all communities (Asian, Hispanic, Cambodian) and building up the creative process at the junior high school level so that the excitement of live theatre, dance, singing and music labels Fall River as a city that values the arts.
- Create an awareness of our culture as a whole. Art is the way humans communicate (e.g., recording stories, practicing traditional art forms).



For more information visit cfsema.org
The Community Foundation’s Arts, Culture & Creativity
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- Create an awareness of our culture as a whole. Art is the way humans communicate (e.g., recording stories, practicing traditional art forms).
- From the 3 Cambodian (CARO) participants: Art students and alumni would take high school, middle school and grade school children under their wing.
- CARO: Clergy of different faiths would have the open forum to communicate and collaborate to tackle the problems that face their respective parishioners and demographics
- CARO: Multi-cultural, multi-lingual center that would offer resource referral to the people in command.
- Local government support
- Trolley route through the city.
- Cleaner city
- Bring back the tall ships.
- City should have Arts and Culture Committee connecting with Neighborhood Association.
- Acknowledgment there is an active arts and culture community and scene in Fall River.
- Sustainable and integrated partnership and collaboration throughout the city. (3)
- Multicultural festival – different nationalities highlighting their culture
- We would have cultural celebrations – not only the Day of Portugal but a true, integral representation of a culture’s arts – food, art, film, dance, music...
- Connecting Lower Highland with the downtown and waterfront
- A Downtown center, where arts can be celebrated by locals and visitors. Celebrate FR’s rich history via the arts – performance, visual arts, gastronomy.
- Great food that represents the many cultures present within the community.
- Food incubator – central kitchen as nucleus for ethnic economic development; foods, regional market.
- Accessibility to art is key!
- Make the arts something the city is proud of, embraces, and supports.
- Collaboration of various groups – singing groups and orchestras
- Attract individuals to join, attend concerts, support the group – all ages and diversities
- Highlight Cambodian dance and art in the city.
- Bring back event like Fall River Celebrates.
- Add a Community Arts Center and an organization to unite the groups and facilitate. (3).
- More free arts events – music, theater.
- Vision that consists of (1) Access (inexpensive and convenient); (2) Promotion (print, on-line, cross-promotion); Variety – different cultures and different art styles (e.g., realism, pottery, graphic design, etc.)
- A website hub for people to find out what’s going on in FR (WeLoveFallRiver.com is current but we need community support and guidance.)
- Fall River as a well-known chorus – large, well-balanced in voice, age and diversities.
- Take advantage of uniquely qualified geographic nexus (central to Providence, Boston, Cape, Newport (2)
- Give 80,000 tourists daily an opportunity to experience and engage in Fall River’s heritage and contemporary culture.
- Tours combining arts, sites and restaurants
- An organization or collaborative that assists in cross-promotion, marketing across the entire artistic community
- A Labor and Textile Museum, in an old mill, to highlight labor history.
- An ethnic museum that highlights our diverse history – utilizing Dr. Phil Silvia
- As a resident here who comes from a small town in Michigan, I think that Fall River has a lot of potential to grow. My vision is to focus on the children in our community, giving them a proven system to succeed. Build up the impoverished area with more activities for the kids and adults to enjoy.
- Artist living space cooperatives – to grow the foundation of the community

CURRENT REALITY

What is currently underway and going well in the arts, culture, and creativity scene in Fall River? In other words, what do you think has been successful, or what do you love?

- There are multiple organizations in FR actively engaged in art and cultural activities.
- The Narrows (10)
- The Narrows expansion (2)
- Battleship Cove/Maritime Museum (6)
- Carousel (2)
- New Battleship director
- Lafayette-Durfee House
- Little Theatre of Fall River (4) – celebrating 82 years of live theater
- Greater Fall River Art Association (4)
- Greater Fall River Symphony
- Creative Arts Network (CAN) Fall River (4)
- Fall River Pubic Library
- Grimshaw Gudewicz Gallery (Bristol Community College)
- We (at CAN FR) are getting more calls for collaborating on projects (the Dennises)
- New Chamber committee on tourism
- Children’s Museum of Greater Fall River (2)
- Development of the waterfront
- Waterfront restaurants
- River Walk Trail (2)
- Bike Trails
- FR Historical Society
- Lizzie Borden (3)
- E for All (Entrepreneurship for All)
- Portuguese festivals attract a good crowd (2)
- There are several music teachers and music schools available
- TJ’s Music expanding their classes
- People Inc exposing groups to arts and culture
- MyFallRiver.org sending out regular emails
- A handful of groups doing great work in a vacuum.
- FR’s Portuguese Community and rich heritage. (2)
- The influx of new cultures – promoting understanding among cultures
- Young, local artists who continue to gather, like Millbury Art group – despite little community support.
- Senior Hi-Rise Concerts
- Highland architecture
- The Amphitheater at Heritage State Park
- We have our dance group!
- Variety of events (2)
- Better roads and access to attractions
- Local talent continues to grow – just need a platform to showcase this talent to our community.
- Dancing
- The Liberal Club
- Artist studios – Open Studios
- Portuguese social clubs
- Colonial Navy
- Quality restaurants (2)

Current Challenges /Barriers

- Most arts and culture organizations are volunteer-driven or have just part-time employees.
- Loss of connection to commitments; loss of financial backing; problem of keeping the fire burning.
- Difficulty of getting business and government leaders to believe that art is economics.
- Little support or participation from Fall River administration (top to bottom). No recognition by politicians in FR of the financial value the arts can bring to this community (3)
- No city leadership /support (3)
- No tourism director
- No attention from the federal delegation to bring \$\$
- Not enough cross-pollination between and arts and culture organizations
- Not enough support/interest by citizens for live theater, AHA events. (4)
- No “feel the love” for arts in our city yet. The city has not yet embraced our own artistic value.
- Need more efficient marketing specifically aimed at certain audiences using all types of media; keeping ticket prices within reach by all. (2)
- FR is very parochial. Everyone is competing for the same piece of the pie.
- Some people residing in FR have no identity ties with the community – the feel that they are not from FR and do not care, either.
- No unified vision
- Management
- Lack ease of access
- Parking fees
- Layout of the city – very spread out, unlike New Bedford
- Not enough public, affordable performance space (2)
- Buildings and storefronts in downtown need to be more accessible and affordable to local vendors, craftsmen, artists, eateries
- Need to continue to save and re-use buildings and develop natural resources such as the river, waterfront, pond, woodlands.
- Downtown needs to be made safer for visitors and pedestrians.
- Poor financial support from our own community. (2)
- Need more positive forums – strong leadership in arts community – networking
- Working with arts in the schools – fostering creativity early. An arts education program can be the heart of the arts community (3)
- Negative attitudes in the community
- Lack of widespread support from the business community
- Distrust of organizations and political groups
- Lack of understanding between older, more established cultures and the influx of newer ones.
- No identified “center” for the arts
- CARO: There is a lack of network between organizations to highlight different cultures. Fall River’s cultural communities are very segregated. We need a gateway.
- A lot of neighborhood crime. We need to build more opportunities and focus resources and mentorships in order to give kids hope and decrease the crime rate and substance use.

WHAT'S NEXT? - How do we get to the next level?

What initiatives/projects/resources would be most critical to making progress toward the vision of Fall River as a place that is a thriving center of arts and creativity?

- Have funding dollars go to established organizations and to start ups – help more of the artists who are working “in the shadows” in the mills.
- Centralized and managed corporate sponsorship for funding the arts
- Educate the city council about the logistics and costs of putting on public events in the city. (to gain greater cooperation and understanding of the limitations faced by the organizations)
- Move on and stay focused on where the support comes from.
- **CARO** (Cambodian-American Rescue Organization)’s annual event is coming soon. We would like to learn more about securing funding and managing grants, donations, and working with organizations seeking to achieve similar goals.
- Revive Open Studios (was started by all-volunteer Arts United years ago, but the organization disbanded when volunteer leadership could not continue.). Need monthly meetings to keep the fire going.
- Make more grants available to the various arts groups in FR.
- Help us find grants, support; provide resources – education. (2)
- Increase support for local arts entrepreneurs, in both the community and in government.
- Strategic program partnerships to grow audiences and combine resources for more impact. (2)
- Support youth development of instrumental performance – through funded lessons for students, for band and orchestra instruments
- Bridge financing and grants for artists who live in the community
- Business support for arts and culture
- Support from city leaders – have an arts liaison who would help creatives navigate the political red tape.
- Organizations should ask schools what they need and then adapt their own programming for mutual benefit (rather than complaining about what schools aren’t doing). E.g., arts and culture orgs could offer to run clubs at schools – drama, arts, technology.
- Keep and grow funding for vital programs that help at-risk youth to become resilient and productive citizens who want to stay in Fall River, e.g. Re-Creation, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, other mentoring programs (very difficult to get support for existing programs).
- Creation of a ‘parent’ organization that can be the hub for all the administrative and business tasks that artists don’t have expertise, resources, or time to do.
- Organizations should stop working in silos so that funding dollars can be used more efficiently (2)
- Funding to bring in diverse array of arts programming from outside the town to supplement Fall River homemade arts and culture.
- Fund mentorships
- Create a Fall River Fund at CFSEMA
- Money, but even more importantly, utilizing the existing talent, especially among our youth, to help enact the programs that we’d like to see realized.
- Unrestricted operating revenue
- Challenge grants
- Centralized volunteer program for arts organizations
- Funding and facilities to support emerging artists who will otherwise leave the city.
- Create a cultural center for all the arts to utilize rather than trying to self-sustain each location.
- Community Arts Center for young people and families – middle and high-school students working with and learning from community artists.
- Create an arts complex? If so, what is best location?
- Are there any buildings that can be adapted as new venues? Or should new structures be developed?

- Utilize the parks for community events e.g., Heritage Park is reaching out to do things. (2)
- Revitalize an old theater for performances.
- Have a stage on wheels
- Improve transportation and parking availability at concert venues.
- Create visual arts hub for students – like Star Store, Cherry & Webb
- Redevelop mill spaces into affordable arts spaces and/or into community arts hub for classes and programs for children.
- A premier outdoor amphitheater for city-wide events that can draw tourism
- Hotel downtown
- Develop waterfront as hub of artistic expression of all kinds (2)
- Address and fix the infrastructure issues – transportation and walkability of the city (e.g., footbridge to waterfront; trolley service; better bus service) (2)
- Transportation with stops at local attractions (trolley) (2)
- Develop Durfee Mills into something like MassMOCA
- Expanded Art Association facilities
- Use Re-Creation space to bring a School of Rock to FR
- Encourage UMass-D to share campus/ resources
- Strategic infrastructure
- Get more people involved and working together, not independently (2)
- Community-wide projects – touching many arts groups in 1 event.
- After School arts programming for K-12: ceramics, painting, animation, graphic arts, mural painting.
- Build on the strengths of the individual neighborhood associations: Highland, Flint, etc.
- To expand opportunities for youth, start a wooden boat-building program.
- For those in substance abuse rehab: start an equine-assisted therapy program.
- Create a music conservatory for children through the Our Lady of Light Band that allows children to learn free of charge. (The children rent their instruments initially and, if they stay with the organization, the band reimburses the children.)
- Veterans activities and awareness
- Educational outreach – all the schools in FR need to be involved in this process in order to create a population that appreciates and is involved in the arts, culture, and history of the city.
- Artists as mentors
- If we can focus more on the kids – get them involved in the community, and have more fun events of all different cultures that we can share and understand – there will not be as much isolation and we can build and learn from each other.
- Need to elevate the art and culture that arises organically; promote and support emerging leadership. Don't focus as much on big productions that may be cost prohibitive or inaccessible to community (e.g., not child friendly).
- Communications systems, networks, and tools for informing and gathering communities (2)
- Central information network (2)
- More use of social media (4)
- Develop community service programs for high school students to develop social media platforms and get the message out.
- Improve communication between organizations
- Coordination of events happening within the community (2)
- The City should hire a Director of Tourism/Marketing (“a Dagny Ashley”) (4)
- Have community liaisons from diverse groups work with the city government to communicate the goals and information of the city

- More clearly defined relationship (regarding communication, promotion, funding) between the City and locals and the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
- Community calendar of events that could be accessed by all (e.g., on the City's website; or Google calendar). Needs to be accessible and well-known to be effective. (e.g., use tax ID to sign in and be able to add event) (10)
- Businesses and art centers need to be willing to support and contribute consistently to an event calendar/magazine/ social media site (tbd) to get the word out about the great events and art projects.
- Better networking to promote events and communication.
- Have different groups visit each other e.g., Historical Society at GFRAA
- Bring awareness to talented individuals about all the great options available to perform, etc. Lure more artists and startup organizations. (2)
- Improve advertisement/communications by engaging FR Herald and others for regular, consistent promotion of events: arts, music, dance, food, festivals.
- Gain support of the mayor, city council, businesses. (3)
- Shared marketing expertise among the groups. (2)
- Support local websites and organizations designed to promote city love, like WeLoveFallRiver.com
- Schools need to promote arts and live theater, music.
- Promote the financial contributions the arts provide communities.
- Create a membership-based arts connection organization, where promotion, calendars, and arts jobs can be organized and developed (like Stagesource in Boston)
- Directory of cultural organizations with map
- Better signage on the highways. (2)
- Have waterfront concerts, food trucks, weekly events e.g. at Heritage Park. (3)
- Have a music festival (like Newport Jazz or Bristol's Music festival to July 4)
- A week-long festival every year at Heritage Park that finishes with a high-profile talent to attract big crowds. Consistency, year after year, is key, to allow people to know to expect this festival every year.
- Have food tours – gastronomy
- Participation in Makerfaire at the Y, in October – arts, tech, music, food come together
- Music and Arts and Ethnic festivals should be ongoing – weekly (2)
- More summer festivals (like New Bedford)
- Establish a "First Friday" style arts stroll or once monthly arts celebration with performances, gallery openings, and free events.
- Open the Quequechan River and create events like Waterfire
- Look at Pawtucket, Wickford, and Westerly as models for what could be done in FR. (Jason Caminiti did documentary called "Pawtucket Rising" in 2008.) [Caution: don't use NB as example, given rivalry between the two cities...]
- Growth of corporates.