



# WATERVILLE CULTURAL BLUEPRINT

April 2017







## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fall of 2015, Waterville Creates! and Waterville Main Street came together with a shared goal to increase the availability, accessibility, and general awareness of arts and cultural offerings in Waterville. The greater Waterville community was invited to engage in a comprehensive cultural planning process in order to identify barriers to participation and understand the current reach, value, and relevance of arts and cultural offerings. The Waterville Cultural Blueprint lays out five priorities and associated objectives and strategies which will enable Waterville to build upon its existing arts and cultural assets to expand programs, increase access, and reach a broader audience.

### GOAL 1: AMPLIFY

Establish a comprehensive marketing and communications plan to amplify Waterville's brand as an arts destination.

### GOAL 2: INTEGRATE

Provide diverse encounters with art, culture, and creativity in the public realm through public art, the city streetscape, neighborhood programs and enhancements, and public performances in both traditional and nontraditional venues.

### GOAL 3: INCREASE ACCESS + RELEVANCE

Ensure access to and relevance of arts, culture, and creative experiences for all residents by identifying barriers to participation and working to eliminate those barriers through increased collaboration, dialogue, and funding.

### GOAL 4: SUPPORT CREATIVITY

Support creativity and artistic expression at all levels by providing networking, employment, and idea exchange opportunities for artists, creative professionals, and community members.

### GOAL 5: SUSTAIN + NURTURE

Ensure the sustainability of Waterville's arts and cultural organizations and programs by building a strong base of support and a system of ongoing leadership and coordination.



# METHODOLOGY

With grant funding from the Maine Arts Commission, Waterville Creates! and Waterville Main Street worked with Reinholt Consulting and a community-sourced steering committee to undertake a comprehensive planning process. The Waterville Cultural Blueprint was created in a series of five steps. Each step was built upon a foundation of data provided by the community at the prior phase. The plan was developed in the following key stages:

## 1. INITIAL RESEARCH

To ensure the cultural blueprint would complement and build upon existing assets, goals, missions, plans, and agendas in Waterville, Reinholt Consulting conducted a review and analysis of existing documents and plans, including the 2014 Waterville Comprehensive Plan, 2013-2017 KVCOG CEDS reports, cultural organization strategic plans, Waterville Development Corporation and Central Maine Growth Council missions and goals, ongoing Colby downtown development work, and existing inventories of cultural assets. This research revealed that the missions, goals, and plans all share common themes related to creative placemaking, improving quality of life, and attracting and cultivating innovation.

## 2. QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Waterville Creates! hosted a cultural plan launch meeting and four Community Conversations with key stakeholders including artists and cultural organizations, educators, business leaders, municipal representatives, and youth. Two Community Conversations were held at the Opera House Dance Studio at 93 Main Street, one at the South End Teen Center, and one at Colby College. The conversations identified perspectives on Waterville's cultural strengths, aspirations, opportunities, and the realities that need to be addressed. The community shared their visions for the future of Waterville, including what they would like to see developed and improved upon and who should be involved. Additional insights from the community were collected during discussions at steering committee meetings. Waterville Creates! marketed the meetings to the public via press releases, announcements, social media, flyers, and targeted invitations to a wide array of diverse stakeholders in the community.

## 3. QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The consultant team designed and issued three customized surveys to test the priorities that emerged out of the qualitative data. One was intended to capture the economic impact, perspectives, and needs of cultural organizations and creative businesses. The second was to evaluate the needs and values of artists and artisans. The third survey was constructed to measure public opinion of the value, reach, and relevance of arts and culture in Waterville. Waterville Creates! worked to

ensure the surveys were available across the greater Waterville area. The steering committee, partner organizations, educational institutions, the municipality, and community service organizations emailed online survey links to their networks. Social media was also used to spread the online survey links. Hard copies were made available at the Waterville Public Library, Railroad Square Cinema, Alford Youth Center, KVCAP, South End Teen Center, Mid Maine Chamber of Commerce, and City Hall. Waterville Creates! distributed business cards and fliers with survey links and QR codes around the community.

## 4. IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITIES

This part of the planning process was overseen by Waterville Creates! and the steering committee working closely with Reinholt Consulting. The consultant team identified priorities and objectives through careful analysis of qualitative and quantitative data and vetted these recommendations with Waterville Creates! All participants of the four community conversations and launch meeting were then invited to attend public forums to review the data findings and help refine the priorities that emerged from the collected data.

## 5. REFINING THE PLAN

This final stage of the process involved several meetings between the consulting team, Waterville Creates! and the steering committee to review and refine the plan that was shaped through the previous stages. Potential strategies were discussed and evaluated against the data that was collected in order to finalize goals, strategies, and objectives and to identify key stakeholders and partners.

Additional information on the cultural planning process, including sample survey instruments, is available by contacting the Waterville Creates! office at 207-616-0292 or [office@watervillecreates.org](mailto:office@watervillecreates.org).





## GOAL 1: AMPLIFY

Promote and increase the vibrancy of Waterville’s existing arts and cultural assets through increased collaboration, marketing, and branding.

### OBJECTIVE 1:

Establish a comprehensive marketing and communications plan to amplify Waterville’s brand as an arts destination.

### STRATEGIES:

- Develop co-op advertising opportunities to expand reach and impact.
- Seek editorial coverage outside of the region and the state through targeting outreach and pitching of special programs and news releases.
- Coordinate marketing roundtable meetings 2-3 times per year to communicate and strategize about future marketing plans and review results of past efforts.

### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, Kennebec Valley Tourism Council, City of Waterville, Waterville Main Street, Colby Center for the Arts & Humanities, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville Opera House, Maine Film Center, Waterville Public Library

95%

OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT ARTS & CULTURE SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE COMMUNITY.

## OBJECTIVE 2:

Develop a creative and engaging marketing strategy to promote Waterville's arts and cultural assets and offerings to residents and visitors.

### STRATEGIES:

- Create and maintain a comprehensive inventory of arts and cultural assets.
- Collect and utilize audience testimonials and incorporate them in future marketing of arts and cultural offerings.
- Enhance the Waterville Creates! website to include engaging and interactive features and improve the usability of the cultural calendar.
- Assess the relevance of existing marketing materials and the effectiveness of current distribution systems.
- Develop improved signage and wayfinding for arts and cultural assets.

### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Mid-Maine Technical Center, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville Opera House, Maine Film Center, Waterville Main Street, Colby Center for the Arts & Humanities, REM, Waterville Public Library, Kennebec Valley Tourism Council, Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce

## OBJECTIVE 3:

Build on existing arts and cultural assets by developing increased collaborative programming to provide a depth of experience for patrons and to encourage cross-institutional audience development.

### STRATEGIES:

- Identify key events, such as the Maine International Film Festival and the Taste of Waterville, that would benefit from complimentary arts programming and work with partners to integrate multi-disciplinary offerings.
- Expand cross-institutional programming using a common theme, such as the Colby Center for the Arts & Humanities annual humanities theme.

### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville Opera House, Maine Film Center, Waterville Main Street, Colby Center for the Arts & Humanities, Waterville Public Library

28%

OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE NOT  
VERY AWARE OF ENTERTAINMENT,  
CREATIVE, AND CULTURAL  
OPPORTUNITIES IN WATERVILLE.





## GOAL 2: INTEGRATE

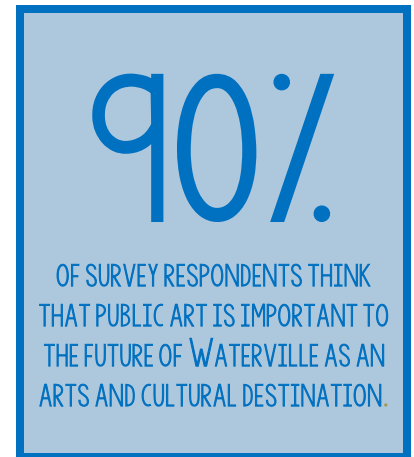
Provide diverse encounters with art, culture, and creativity in the public realm through public art, the city streetscape, neighborhood programs and enhancements, and public performances in both traditional and nontraditional venues.

### OBJECTIVE 1:

Create a public art program that is inspiring, accessible, flexible, and thoughtfully curated.

### STRATEGIES:

- Establish a Public Art Task Group to develop and implement a plan for public art in the City of Waterville.
- Create a public art policy for the city that addresses temporary public art options, maintenance plans for permanent or semi-permanent public art, and necessary ordinance changes.
- Identify potential locations for public art.
- Identify funding sources for public art.
- Develop and promote a proposal process for public art projects.
- Advocate for the integration of public art in the Riverwalk project, downtown streetscape projects, recreational trails and parks, and other highly visible locations and projects.



### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

City of Waterville, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville Main Street, Kennebec Messalonskee Trails, Waterville Public Library

## OBJECTIVE 2:

Animate public spaces and private venues in the downtown area and beyond through special programming, events, and performances.

### STRATEGIES:

- Establish a Live Music Task Group to help match venues with musicians of all skill levels.
- Work with arts organizations to develop and promote free public performances in Castonguay Square.
- Activate Head of Falls with live music events, festivals, and other public activities.
- Encourage and promote neighborhood celebrations and integrate arts activities into their events.
- Work with downtown and surrounding businesses to coordinate a Waterville Art Walk or similar event.

### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!, Waterville Main Street

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Snow Pond Center for the Arts, Colby Music Department, Atlantic Music Festival, Waterville Opera House, Maine Film Center, Colby Theater and Dance Department, City of Waterville, South End Neighborhood Association, Waterville Area Arts Society, Waterville Public Library, area music teachers, private music promoters

## OBJECTIVE 3:

Advance beautification efforts in Downtown Waterville.

### STRATEGIES:

- Advocate for strong design standards and public improvements that contribute to Waterville's arts and cultural identity.
- Partner with service organizations to identify and implement specific, achievable, impactful improvement projects.
- Incentivize private property investments through a Façade Grant Program and/or Signage Grant Program.
- Work with artists to create colorful street furniture.

### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Main Street

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

City of Waterville, Colby College, Waterville Creates!, South End Neighborhood Association, Central Maine Growth Council, Waterville Rotary clubs, Central Maine Garden Club

86%

OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE IN MORE PLACES.

81%

OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS SHOW A HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST IN LIVE MUSIC AND CONCERTS.



3 OUT OF 4 SURVEY RESPONDENTS FEEL THAT INTEGRATING ARTS + CULTURE IN THE DOWNTOWN IS VERY IMPORTANT TO WATERVILLE'S FUTURE.





## GOAL 3: INCREASE ACCESS + RELEVANCE

Ensure access to and relevance of arts, culture, and creative experiences for all residents by identifying barriers to participation and working to eliminate those barriers through increased collaboration, dialogue, and funding.

### OBJECTIVE 1:

Develop partnerships between arts and non-arts organizations to identify barriers to participation in the arts and develop new ways of reaching people with arts, culture, and creativity.

#### STRATEGIES:

- Work with underserved audiences to identify the kinds of programs that would be most appealing to them.
- Identify funding for organizations to take their programs to underserved audiences.

#### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!/ Common Street Arts, Waterville Opera House, Waterville Public Library, Maine Film Center, Colby College Museum of Art

#### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Muskie Center, South End Teen Center, Alford Youth Center, REM, Inland Hospital, MaineGeneral, Healthy Northern Kennebec, KVCAP, United Way, Poverty Action Coalition, Mid-Maine Regional Adult Community Education, Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter, Educare, Snow Pond Center for the Arts

### OBJECTIVE 2:

Address the financial barriers that limit participation.

#### STRATEGIES:

- Create an arts access fund designed to provide:
  - scholarships to youth interested in art, theater, and music classes and camps

1/2

OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS WITH SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN SAID THEY WOULD PARTICIPATE IN OFFERINGS MORE OFTEN IF THEY WERE MORE AFFORDABLE.

- movie, theater, and performance tickets.
- Identify funding sources to assist arts organizations in offering more free events, workshops, classes, and activities.
- Offer incentives for audience development, such as admission to cultural offerings in exchange for volunteerism.

### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Waterville Opera House, Waterville Public Library, Maine Film Center, Colby College Museum of Art, Colby College Center for the Arts & Humanities, Snow Pond Center for the Arts

## OBJECTIVE 3:

Address transportation needs through local and regional coordination.

### STRATEGIES:

- Explore opportunities to work with private and public transportation providers to transport program participants between venues.
- Establish a local pool of funding to support school field trips to arts institutions.
- Improve transportation between college campuses and Downtown Waterville.

### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

KVCAP, Waterville Creates!

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

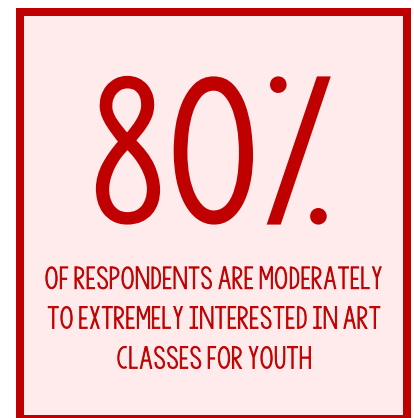
Colby College, Thomas College, public schools, private transportation companies, United Way, City of Waterville, Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce

## OBJECTIVE 4:

Increase relevant, accessible programming for youth and young adults.

### STRATEGIES:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of arts and cultural education programming in Waterville schools and the community to identify priorities for youth programming.
- Invite youth to participate in planning youth programming.
- Expand Youth Art Month activities to include more venues, events, schools, and partners.
- Work with college students to program downtown venues with programming that appeals to their age group.
- Explore a family-first program to provide discounted rates and scholarships to families.



### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!/Common Street Arts, Waterville Public Library, Waterville Opera House, Maine Film Center, Colby College Museum of Art



## SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Area public and private schools, home school networks, Maine Alliance for Arts Education, Colby College, Thomas College, Kennebec Valley Community College, Mid-Maine Technical Center, Alford Youth Center, South End Teen Center, KVCAP, Educare

## OBJECTIVE 5:

Engage residents and visitors with arts and cultural learning experiences.

## STRATEGIES:

- Expand arts education opportunities for youth and adults.
- Explore ways to engage residents and visitors in cultural heritage and local history, including:
  - Updating the Downtown Waterville Historic Walking Tour.
  - Promoting the Redington Museum.
  - Exploring a community history center.
  - Incorporating historic signage along trails and in other public places.

## SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!/Common Street Arts, Waterville Public Library, Waterville Opera House, Maine Film Center, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville Historical Society/Redington Museum

## SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Mid-Maine Regional Adult Community Education, Colby Libraries, Colby Special Collections, Kennebec Valley Franco-American Heritage Society, Taconnet Falls Genealogy Library, Center for Small Town Jewish Life, St. Joseph's Maronite Church, REM



## GOAL 4: SUPPORT CREATIVITY

Support creativity and artistic expression at all levels by providing networking, employment, and idea exchange opportunities for artists, creative professionals, and community members.

### OBJECTIVE 1:

Create opportunities for networking by hosting gatherings for artists and creative professionals.

#### STRATEGIES:

- Encourage new membership in and support of the Waterville Area Arts Society and Common Street Arts
- Host informal artist gatherings at Common Street Arts, Colby College Museum of Arts, and other institutions and businesses.

#### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!/Common Street Arts, Waterville Area Arts Society

#### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

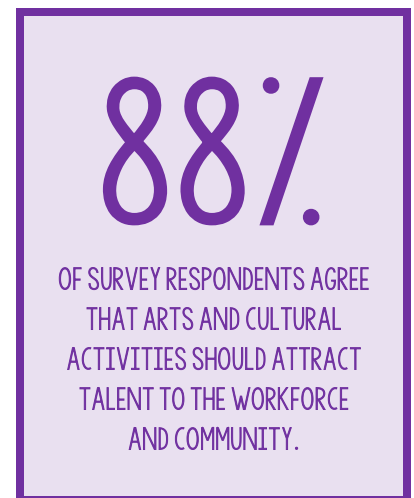
Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville Public Library, KV Connect, Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, Maine Arts Commission, New England Foundation for the Arts

### OBJECTIVE 2:

Build upon PechaKucha Night Waterville's outstanding reputation and attendance to maximize its potential as a creative networking and marketing tool for Waterville.

#### STRATEGIES:

- Collaborate with community partners to get the word out about proposal deadlines and events.
- Promote PKN as Waterville's premiere vehicle for creative, community dialogue and idea exchange.





## SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Public Library, Waterville Creates!

## SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

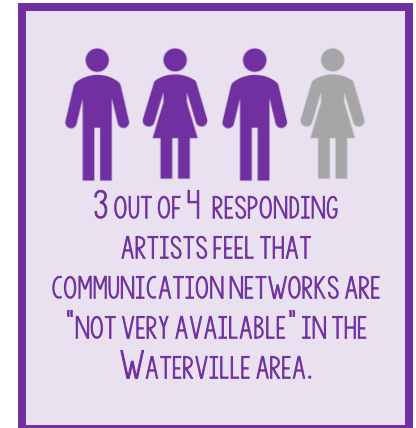
Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, Waterville Main Street, Thomas College, Colby College, Colby College Center for the Arts & Humanities, Kennebec Valley Community College, Mid-Maine Global Forum, KV Connect

## OBJECTIVE 3:

Provide new and expanded employment, exhibition and demonstration opportunities as well as incentive and recognition programs for artists.

## STRATEGIES:

- Develop mentorship and internship programs across institutions to provide diverse professional development experience.
- Develop artist-in-residency and fellowship programs that are integrated with the programming of multiple local arts institutions.
- Explore the possibility of an awards or recognition program for local artists and/or creative businesses.
- Explore the creation of an Arts District in Downtown Waterville.
- Encourage the development of affordable studio/makers spaces for practicing artists.
- Further develop and promote opportunities for teaching artists in the community.
- Work with businesses to coordinate periodic weekend demos by artists, crafters, and musicians.



## SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!

## SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, Waterville Main Street, Thomas College, Colby College, Kennebec Valley Community College, KV Connect, Mid-Maine Technical Center, REM, Waterville Public Library, Central Maine Growth Council



## GOAL 5: SUSTAIN + NURTURE

Ensure the sustainability of Waterville’s arts and cultural organizations and programs by building a strong base of support and a system of ongoing leadership and coordination.

### OBJECTIVE 1:

Provide professional development opportunities to strengthen Waterville’s arts and cultural sector.

#### STRATEGIES:

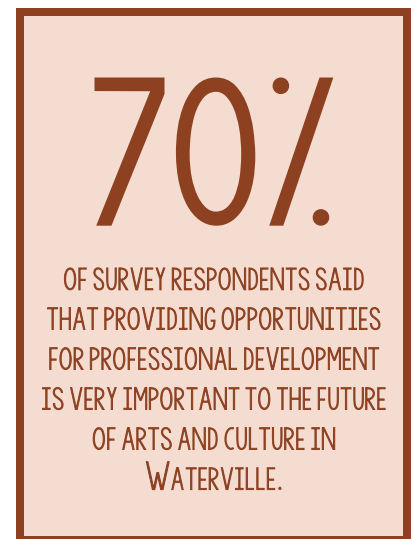
- Partner with established organizations to offer workshops and trainings for volunteer board members, staff, and community members.
- Provide links and resources for professional development opportunities for creative professionals.
- Provide paid internship opportunities for college students interested in arts and cultural fields.

#### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, Waterville Public Library, KV Connect

#### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Waterville Creates!, Maine Association of Nonprofits, Maine Arts Commission, New England Foundation for the Arts, Maine College of Art, New Ventures Maine, Thomas College, Colby College, Kennebec Valley Community College



### OBJECTIVE 2:

Identify and secure new opportunities for funding of arts and cultural initiatives.

#### STRATEGIES:

- Develop cross-institutional sponsorship opportunities to consolidate “asks” to local businesses.



- Encourage collaboration between organizations to develop larger scale, national grant requests.
- Explore the use of TIF funds to establish a public art fund.

### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

City of Waterville, Central Maine Growth Council, Waterville Main Street, Colby College Center for the Arts & Humanities

### OBJECTIVE 3:

Measure and communicate to community stakeholders and the public the impact of arts and culture on the community and the region.

### STRATEGIES:

- Track monthly and annual attendance figures at arts and cultural institutions and events and use data to raise public awareness of the value of arts and culture in the community.
- Conduct and/or participate in economic impact studies to measure the activity generated by arts and cultural institutions and events.

### SUGGESTED LEADER(S):

Waterville Creates!

### SUGGESTED PARTNER(S):

Maine Film Center, Waterville Public Library, Waterville Opera House, Waterville Main Street, Colby College Museum of Art, Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, Central Maine Growth Council

