CONDUCTED FOR THE CITY OF PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

BY

ARTSMARKET

2014
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INTRODUCTION

The City of Pittsfield has a well-deserved reputation as a growing cultural hub, a community that has engaged artist-residents in strengthening both vitality and economic strength through the establishment of ever increasing numbers of nonprofit and entrepreneurial arts organizations. In 2009, the City was awarded the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Commonwealth Award for Creative Community, recognizing the substantial work the City has done: The City’s Up Street Cultural District was among the first five of the state-sponsored Cultural Districts to be established.

Early efforts in the creation of store-front art spaces (Storefront Artists) as well as in the installation of works of public art done by Artscape led to subsequent development of the Downtown Arts Overlay cultural district. As that designation was unfolding, the dual theater hubs anchoring the district, Barrington Stage and the Colonial Theatre/Berkshire Theater Company, grew stronger and larger. The Berkshire Museum expanded. The Beacon Cinema opened within the space of the 1918 Kinnel-Kresge building.

Artists moved into Pittsfield and joined together in shared studio space. NuArts Studios and the City-owned and operated Lichtenstein Center for the Arts created space for twenty eight visual artist studios. The opening of Shire City Sanctuary as a maker’s space facility served as an additional draw. However, with 450 artists listed as members of the Pittsfield-based Berkshire Artists Association, these studio spaces are far fewer than needed, as demonstrated in this report.

In 2014, with an officially designated Cultural District, an active community of artists and arts organizations, the City embarked on this study to evaluate needs for additional art spaces, to learn from artists concerning their current and future space needs, and to assess potential matches between available and existing downtown buildings and artist space needs so as to continue Pittsfield’s cultural development momentum.

The purpose of this study was to:

1. Prepare an inventory of current and prospective arts spaces within the Downtown Arts Overlay District, including a baseline inventory of the artists living and working downtown.
2. Conduct a survey of artists and gather quantitative and qualitative information from artists and arts organizations concerning current and prospective space needs and priorities;
3. Analyze findings to provide an understanding of how current spaces are meeting needs, what needs are not being met, and the threats to, and weaknesses of, existing space.

This study was conducted with the assistance and involvement of the Pittsfield Department of Community Development, and the Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development. More than 200
Pittsfield and Berkshire artists and arts organization representatives participated in the study either through completing the on-line survey, participating in round table discussions and interviews, or both. Other organizational and community leaders participated as well. Many of Pittsfield’s cultural facilities and work spaces were visited, and prospective facilities in the Overlay district were examined.

This study was conducted by ArtsMarket’s lead consultant/researcher, Louise K. Stevens, whose expertise includes facility feasibility studies and cultural development plans, market studies and financial/business plan analyses in the arts. ArtsMarket is located in Bozeman, MT.

**DEFINITIONS**

This study uses the term art space to broadly including any type of studio, work space, live work space, theatrical/production space, and gallery space focused on artistic work and used by artists or arts organizations.

There is a growing vocabulary of nearly synonymous terms. “Workspace,” or “shared workspace,” typically refer to spaces in which individuals – often start up entrepreneurs – can have exclusive or shared access to workstations including desk and IT, with shared conference rooms, printers and other equipment, and where these individuals can come and go freely while developing their businesses. This type of space can also be called “co-working space.”

“Worker space” is a relatively new term that draws upon historic movements such as the Roycrofters and other craft-based production groups. In worker space, heavy production equipment and facility design make it possible for individual artists who work in media such as metal sculpture/foundry work, wood, glass, clay, large scale fibre work and other similar media that require zoning and typically large, expensive equipment. By providing equipment such as kilns and amenities such as freight elevators, worker spaces can serve numerous artists who otherwise would not be able to afford or even find their own space. Some types of worker spaces are also called “hot shops” – for example, facilities that are used by artists working in glass, metal, and ceramics. And, most recently, some worker spaces are developed for artists doing more small scale fine-craft work such as needlework or jewelry making. In these spaces, it is the idea of craftspeople being able to work in proximity to each other that is an important philosophical grounding. Often, these spaces are wide open – i.e. no individual, private studios – though they may feature locking storage.

Artist work spaces are spaces designed to serve visual, performing, media, and literary artists who wish to be located in proximity to other artists. Artist work spaces have traditionally been comprised of individual studios rented exclusively by an artist or nonprofit arts group, not shared with others.

Live-work space or complexes are comprised largely or in part of units that are rented or structured as condos or co-ops in which artists combine their studio space into their apartment or dwelling space. These spaces are often favored for development because developers can take
advantage of state and federal programs for below marketing housing development if they
dedicate all or a portion of the building to artists earning less than the local average household
income. One issue with live work spaces is that there may be zoning variance considerations,
for example if artists within the complex work in media that would be zoned light industrial.
Another issue potentially requiring variance is that many of these facilities include main floor
public space as well live-work space, with the public spaces including performance venues,
restaurants, galleries or retail.

Artist live space generally refers to apartment or shared house structures dedicated to artists
who may be in a production that requires a short term to medium term residence in the
community. In a community such as Pittsfield, with multiple theatre companies and where the
seasonal cost of rent during prime summary months can be high, the availability of such
facilities is essential.

There are other terms used that mingle some or all of the above. “Teaching studio space”
means space in which an artist can accommodate individual or groups of students. This can
require zoning and building inspection consideration if, for example, a visiting school class.
“Community studio space” typically refers to space used, for example, by the City or a City
department to offer instruction or classes to provide arts learning for residents. “Community
arts space” typically refers to city owned or nonprofit owned space available for free or nominal
charge to other nonprofits and community groups.
KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Pittsfield’s Downtown Arts Overlay District offers the City a remarkable positioning and branding opportunity within the arts-rich Berkshires, especially if the District becomes home to additional theater and performing spaces and, through this, becomes home to more performing organizations. Pittsfield is developing as the “theatre destination” within the Berkshires, and its existing resident theater companies, notably Berkshire Theatre Group/The Colonial Theatre and Barrington Stage Company, are currently expanding their multi-building presence as anchors to the District. Additional theater companies - notably WAM Theatre, the Berkshire Fringe, and Shakespeare in the Park – would locate in the District and offer year round performances and educational programs if additional venue(s) were established. Other performance organizations would use this type of rental space if it became available. Some involved in this study suggested the Berkshire Community College theater program could be an anchor in such a downtown facility.

Creating a greater density of theater and performance space available for rental year-round within the District would further cultural tourism and increase the arts economic benefit to the City, as visitors to performance venues typically dine out and spend money off-site in association with their visits.

Several existing buildings within Downtown could be effectively repurposed for a multi-stage theater/performance space and are identified in this report. The need is not for a traditional large hall such as the Colonial Theatre, but for a facility that encompasses two smaller spaces seating anywhere from 50 to 250 and that ideally also includes a retail gallery space.\(^1\) The Pershing Square Signature Center, in New York City, is an effective model. Opened in 2011, it includes three small theaters, studio rehearsal space, a bookstore and a café, all created within a new mixed use development.

2. The next greatest need after additional performance/small theatre space is for artist live work space close to or, ideally, within the District. This study identified 42 artists who expressed interest in live/work space in Pittsfield. Some of these have been seeking such space for a number of years.

They specifically seek space where there is good visibility and street level opportunity to establish a co-op gallery.

3. Additional makers’ space or studio work space is needed. The majority of artists who participated in this study currently work at home, and many of these seek the opportunity to work out of a studio complex where there are other working artists.

\(^1\) While both Barrington Stage and Berkshire Theatre Group make space available for rent to other theatre groups, their own growing schedules are limiting the availability of these spaces to rent to others, particularly during peak seasons for cultural visitation to Pittsfield.
Current spaces including NuArts and the Lichtenstein have no open studios. Also, artists seek larger studios that are currently available within the district. We believe that an additional 15-20 studios could be rapidly filled with tenants.

4. Any studio or facility complex that is developed should include meet and work space similar to shared workspaces that are springing up in cities throughout the country, where there are small conference rooms for meetings along with basic shared office equipment. Many artists who are, for example, theater directors, musicians or others involved in collaborative work need places where they can bring groups of people together for meetings.

5. The City’s arts facility condition is an issue:

The City-owned and operated Lichtenstein Center has an attractive and professional quality gallery space on the main floor, but its basement ceramics studio and its upstairs studio spaces are in need of cleaning and improvement. If some of the “temporary” walls installed a few years ago were removed, top floor use could be maximized. It appears that an elevator shaft was at one point partially built; if this was finished, the entire building would become far more useful. In addition to the facility’s condition, a larger evaluation of best use for the arts may be appropriate if additional studio space can be developed elsewhere. There is need for teaching/arts education space and for flexible performance and additional gallery space that could be met at this building. If it remains a facility for individual artist studios, it may be appropriate for criteria to be developed for artists renting the space as is often done in studio complexes, to insure that artists are actively involved in the upkeep and marketing of the building as a whole.

The City’s portable stage also needs attention, although it may be best to purchase a replacement.

6. The condition of other arts and creative spaces in the District are an issue. The Whitney Center needs investment to become fully functional as a community arts center. Shire City Sanctuary needs to become either a performance venue (the sanctuary space) or a multi-use makers’ space. Planning counsel or assistance that could be made available to help these and other building projects viable to receive planning and capital grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities fund would be helpful.

7. The final set of recommendations go beyond facilities inventory and needs and are raised here because Pittsfield has done so much for cultural development that some additional steps are logical at this time.

A) To further animate the Downtown Arts Overlay District and develop a greater sense of the arts within the district, it would be appropriate for Pittsfield to establish a true public art program. This should include funding strategies for commissioning and
on-going care for works of public art as well as a master plan for siting public art works in the Downtown Arts Overlay District. This can best be done through expansion of the existing Artscape program, which should be moved to the Office of Cultural Development.

B) Facility needs and possibilities such as a multi-stage venue as recommended here should ideally be examined within the larger context of a comprehensive cultural plan. Pittsfield has not undertaken such a plan to date. With a new director recently appointed to the City Office of Cultural Development, this would be a logical time to create a framework for all cultural development undertakings so that Pittsfield can continue to solidify its cultural-center position.

C) Pittsfield should consider applying to the Cultural Facilities Fund program for funding to upgrade the Lichtenstein Center into a fully viable community arts center. (The City received a Cultural Facilities planning grant to fund this study.) If the City can respond to the recommendations here with further upgrade and design studies, an application to the Fund in the 2014-15 fiscal year would be an excellent next step. Additional funding sources should be considered to potentially purchase and convert other facilities to community arts facilities. The primary facilities to be considered should include the Masonic Temple and, ideally, additional buildings to be used for live work space and artist/creative studios. These facilities could be repurposed for the arts through a range of purchase and ownership models that should be explored through a feasibility study or studies. These could include City of Pittsfield ownership of the buildings with lease to nonprofit or for-profit operating groups; for-profit development; or nonprofit developer purchase and repurposing.
## FACILITIES INVENTORY

### SPACES CURRENTLY USED FOR THE ARTS

The following are currently used as arts spaces:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip</th>
<th>Description</th>
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ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SPACES

Pittsfield is fortunate to have outstanding cultural space assets, both current and planned. The City’s anchor facilities – Barrington Stage, Berkshire Athenaeum, Berkshire Museum, Berkshire Theatre Group/Colonial Theatre – are all outstanding facilities. The recent and planned additions to Berkshire Theatre Group/Colonial Theatre (The Garage), the Platt Performance Center and the Beacon Theatre further the breadth and quality of facilities.

Quality facilities like these, as well as the growing community of artists working in these facilities, in turn attract other creatives. Indeed, Pittsfield has been attracting artists every year who have chosen to leave Boston, New York, and other cities in favor of Pittsfield. Our research showed that other artists are continuing to want to move to Pittsfield – but can’t find space. Interviews showed that artists and organizations currently located elsewhere in the Berkshires would like to locate to Pittsfield if they could find space.

Many of the spaces listed here are “full,” in use, have waiting lists, or lack the features that artists seek. The list below shows the spaces that are available for artists and groups to use/rent.

1. Barrington Stage
   
   Little available rental time within the calendar year. The Blatt Performing Arts Center facility (St. Germain Stage) is increasingly booked by Barrington Stage, limiting time that it is available for rentals.

2. Shire City Sanctuary
   
   Is seeking tenants for makers’ space; sanctuary used for performances and art showings. But the building is for sale, which may keep artists from committing to long term residence here. Also, the sanctuary is not viable for extensive theatrical use without considerable cost.
3. Berkshire Theatre Group/Colonial Theatre
   Expanding through adaptive reuse of the garage building, carriage barn as scene shop; former B and B as visiting artist housing; there will be some rental availability in the garage building (111 South Street) when it is completed, but BTG will likely use the space most of the time for multiple, simultaneous rehearsals.

4. Berkshire Museum
   The Museum theatre is used regularly, but groups renting it have difficulty working within the limitations of the space. The Museum also works with local visual artists.

5. Whitney Center
   Heavily used by the visual arts community and as home to Town Players. Could be used more with building upgrades/ modification.

6. Lichtenstein Art Center
   Could be used more with upgrades and adaptation, sound proofing.

7. NuArts
   Full, with waiting list.

8. Beacon Cinema
   Lobby/hallway space has been used informally as gallery space.

9. New Stage
   Formerly a theatre space above the Beacon Cinema; closed to this use by City of Pittsfield.

10. Hancock Shaker Village
    The barn is used seasonally for art exhibits.

11. Melville Artist Apartments
    Full, with waiting list.

Spaces that are now nearly fully booked, including Barrington Stage and its Blatt Performing Arts Center as well as New Stage were as recently as a few years ago able to accommodate theatre companies in the Berkshires seeking a few weeks to rent space for productions. As production calendars have increased, these spaces have become less available. Groups have turned to the Berkshire Museum to use its theatre, but find it very challenging to stage theatre in a space more appropriate for lectures and film. The one artist work space noted here, NuArts, has a waiting list and is too small in studio size to meet the needs of artists who work in larger media or those who have staff/assistants working with them. Shire City Sanctuary offers great potential as its spaces become ready for workers’ space rentals, but the building is also on the market for sale, limiting the viability of artists moving there for the long term. The one existing artist live/work building, Melville Artist Apartments, has a waiting list.
Nonprofit art spaces such as the Whitney Center need planning and eventual facility grant assistance to maximize the use – and renovate their buildings.

The City-owned Lichtenstein Arts Center, which has a lovely main floor gallery space, also houses nine artist studios. At least one of these studios is used largely for storage. Open spaces on the second floor now used for storage could be cleaned out and potentially reconfigured, possibly enabling the building to accommodate one or more additional studios. Community use space on the third floor could be maximized if the space was reconfigured and if soundproofing was added.

Lack of soundproofing means that when groups such as this drumming class use the Lichtenstein’s third floor, other simultaneous uses of the building are limited.

At some point, drywall partitions were made throughout the building, creating studios, some strangely configured rooms, and hallways of uneven width. Removing these and opening the space could allow the space to be used for either art exhibits or possibly performances. It appears that an elevator shaft was at least partially built at one point. Completing this would provide two entries/exits and would make it possible for the third floor space to be used for events such as theatre or music performances. The basement space, now used for a pottery studio and for storage, could be cleaned, opening some of this space for prospective additional use. Parking solutions should also be examined, making the building far more viable as an arts center, though the First Street parking lot is not far away; perhaps better signage directing people to the building, and for those that pull up to the building, to the First Street lot would help. At the very least, a loading zone would help artists move art work in and out of the building.
As the City’s own visual arts and performance venue, the Lichtenstein should become a jewel throughout, something that Pittsfield can point to with pride as a true hub for the Downtown Arts Overlay District. Individual artist studios that are largely closed to the public may not be best suited for this building; instead, teaching studios or additional flexible performance space may be the best and highest use of the facility. The City derives $200 rent per month per studio. If the floors were opened up and sound proofing solutions were added, along with an elevator and flexible stage lighting, public use for events, theatre, music, more art exhibits – as well as social events, weddings and parties - would be likely rentals if the building was more desirable and would likely bring in nearly as much, or more. We urge the City to take a thoughtful look at what can be done, and to move forward with applications for grant funding to make this building a stunning, multi-use space.

Painting by Walt Pasko, Pittsfield Art Show, outside the Lichtenstein Art Center. Many of the tents, owned by the City, have been damaged over time by weather. Replacing these tents would be a great first step in re-establishing the Pittsfield Art Show outside the Lichtenstein.

An additional City-owned “facility” needs attention as well. The City owns the portable stage that is used for performances in parks, for Summer Nights of Music, and for virtually all outdoor festival events. It has been used hard, and needs replacement. According to City staff, the stage is in very bad shape; the side panels are damaged and taking on water and rotting from the inside out. The weight of these water logged panels are putting excessive pressure on the hydraulics that open and close the stage. The metal parts of the stage are rusty, making operation difficult.

City of Pittsfield Portable Stage.
LIMITATIONS ON THE USE OF TEMPORARY SPACES

In the past artists have used storefront spaces not rented by the building owners as temporary gallery space. Currently, artists continue to use gallery spaces as offered by groups such as Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. for the artist walk tours. While useful, temporary use is not something adaptable to performing arts needs, or to installation of large scale visual art work. These needs haven’t been met and are unlikely to be met by vacant storefronts or second floor space. Also, building inspection regulations by the City limit use of many of these spaces for performances. This means that many groups and individual artists who wish to be visible and/or to locate permanently in Pittsfield cannot do so.

ANALYSIS OF PROSPECTIVE SPACES

The City of Pittsfield Department of Community Development worked with ArtsMarket throughout this process and contributed the following list of buildings that could be various types of art space, from arts education space to flexible gallery/performance space, to artist live-work space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Art Space</th>
<th>Consultant Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>116 South St.</td>
<td>As with Masonic Temples anywhere, this building offers a straightforward transformation into a performance space, with a built in theatre and dance space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 South St.</td>
<td>Could make excellent second and third floor gallery and live work space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 North St.</td>
<td>This could become outstanding live/work studio space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 North St.</td>
<td>Second and third floor space could be used for artist studios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 North St.</td>
<td>This historic bank building has the size to be viable as an artist live work studio space with main floor gallery space and/or performance space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 North St.</td>
<td>With 22 existing apartment units and some 60,000 square feet of additional space that could be used for artist studios, plus a basement that could be transformed into performance space, this building has the potential to be an extraordinary arts complex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 North St.</td>
<td>Live/work studio space and gallery space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 North St.</td>
<td>This historically important building could become a multi-use performance venue or could house top quality loft studio apartments or workspace. It currently offers rental units at $1 s/f, which is a standard rate for artist live/work studios. Live/work studio space and gallery space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122 North St.</td>
<td>With main floor retail gallery space, this building could become a studio complex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141 North St.</td>
<td>This building could become an artist studio building with main floor gallery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146 North St.</td>
<td>Prospective live/work studio space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160 North St.</td>
<td>Prospective live/work studio space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>266 North St.</td>
<td>With high ceilings and large windows, this could become a favored artist live/work facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239 North St.</td>
<td>Excellent size for live/work studio space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 North St.</td>
<td>Live/work studio space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>308 North St.</td>
<td>Live/work studio space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>338 North St.</td>
<td>Live/work studio space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350 North St.</td>
<td>This sanctuary building could become a large scale performance venue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>391 North St.</td>
<td>Prospective artist live/work studio space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413 North St.</td>
<td>Prospective live work studio space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>421 North St.</td>
<td>Prospective live/work studio space; possibly suitable to mail floor performance space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>461 North St.</td>
<td>Prospective live/work and gallery space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>549 North St.</td>
<td>Prospective live/work and gallery space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>644 North St.</td>
<td>Potential live/work space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among this inventory are several buildings that lend themselves especially to artist and arts organization use. We recommend that the City of Pittsfield prioritize these to the full extent possible as important creative spaces.

**CONSULTANT RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES FOR ART SPACES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>116 South St. Masonic Temple</strong></td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>This building, an historic Masonic Temple, is a natural for a performance space complex. Of all the buildings available in the Arts District, this would be the one we would urge the City to evaluate and potentially develop as a community performance venue that could accommodate two+ theatre spaces, music/film space, and rehearsal spaces. Please see notes on multi-stage facility models, below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 North St.</strong></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>The scale of this building offers opportunities that smaller buildings cannot: the ability to offer some live work spaces as limited equity ownership as well as others as low income live work space; common spaces and art gallery/retail space, and revenue-producing performance space that could be on the main floor and in the basement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
266 North St. This building has the makings of a top quality artist live/work space, with imposing windows and excellent light.

141 North St. This building may offer the range of amenities needed for artist studio space, including excellent light, ground floor space for a co-op gallery, elevator, and an open floor plan. Studio buildings should allow for studios of varying size, high quality ventilation, oversize doors, loading dock or large loading doors.

**SUMMARY: CURRENT AND AVAILABLE SPACES WITH CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATIONS**

As illustrated in this section of the report, existing art spaces in the Downtown Arts Overlay District are full or essentially booked to the extent possible. Spaces that have availability, such as the Shire City Sanctuary, may or may not become fully functional makers’ space and performance/gallery space.

To take Pittsfield to the next level as the theatre hub of the Berkshires – a distinction it has already earned and has the potential to solidify – additional theatre space should be added. However, the theater companies and groups that seek Pittsfield space (see next chapter) would not each require year round space as do the Berkshire Theatre Group or Barrington Stage. Instead, these groups would want very intimate space where they could produce performances a few weeks a year as well as access to rehearsal space. Music ensembles could use similar types of space.

At a basic level, this suggests the City takes the lead in securing the funds to upgrade the Lichtenstein Art Center into a facility that accommodates more diverse creative use. This may potentially mean that the current work spaces in this building are moved to another art building.

**MASONIC TEMPLE**

Even more desirable would be a second step: transforming the Masonic Temple into a performance venue with small stages and spaces: the building could potentially also include studio and live work spaces as revenue sources. (There may be a code issue in considering combined living and performance space.)
Every Masonic Temple has a primary hall rimmed with a balcony or slightly raised area for seating, a raised platform, and a flat floor. Even dressing room area is already established. This is typically replicated in form either on an additional floor or in a basement, typically used for dances. As a result, it is easy to transform such open space into performance space.

Several successful models exist in the U.S. of Masonic Temples transformed into performance and rehearsal spaces.

This illustrates how the combination of existing high ceilings and open space support adaptation into flexible space that can be used for rehearsals or performances. The space also serves as a rental space for events.
Performance and gallery space in the Hoogland Center for the Arts, Springfield, Illinois, a former Masonic Temple. Completed: 2004

Performance hall/rental venue within the Vallejo, CA Temple Arts Lofts, adaptive reuse of a 1917 Masonic Temple into a complex that includes ground floor restaurant and nonprofit rental space, performance space, and 26 affordable live work apartment rentals for artists.

There are a number of small theatre companies seeking space in Pittsfield. (WAM, Berkshire Fringe, New Theatre, Shakespeare in the Parks among others.) These organizations would use space throughout the year for performance and education programming. The type of space they would prefer would be very flexible, intimate theatre space.

Model of flexible theatre spaces including collapsible stadium seating, Signature Theatre complex, New York City. This complex houses three small stages, a café and bookstore and is a good model for adaptive reuse of the Masonic Temple.
Another possibility for the Masonic Temple is a combination of live/work and performance space. In downtown Vallejo, CA, a Masonic Temple was redeveloped into such a combination, through the use of federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds. The ground floor includes a café and office space for nonprofit arts groups.

ARTIST LIVE/WORK COMPLEX

We recommend that the City of Pittsfield work toward locating at least one and ideally two artist live/work buildings of significant scale within the Arts District. As the next chapter (survey of artist needs) will show, there is demand to support the creation of at least 20 new units of live work space and possible as much as 45 units. Typically, larger buildings offering at least 15 units offer a chance to mix funding and financing strategies, including Historic Tax Credits, New Market, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and even Limited Equity Ownership of some units. Larger spaces also are appealing if they offer co-operative gallery space on the main floor, and potentially some performance or restaurant space. Creating a density of live work space is important: larger buildings offer developers a greater financial opportunity to make the model successful, and create a density of artist activity that is significant and transforming. Artists generally seek a combination of excellent natural light, higher than normal ceilings, open space/floor plans, excellent ventilation, and typically an elevator or freight elevator to transport art work and supplies.

Artist live/work buildings may also incorporate studio space and at-market retail space – a combination that leads to more revenue opportunity for the developer. For example, this building in Providence RI combines live work space on the top two floors with artist studio rental space on the second floor, at market commercial space on the main floor, and dance studio space in the basement.
ARTIST WORK SPACE

We recommend the establishment of at least one artist work space/studio complex in the Arts District. (This might either be a sole purpose studio/works space building, or part of a larger artist complex per the Mercantile Building model, above.) This will be a particularly pressing need if the Lichtenstein facility is repurposed for more public arts and creative use. Artists responding to the needs survey included many Pittsfield artists now working out of their homes who desire studio spaces in a building where they can rub elbows with other creatives and where they can have open-studio tours and open-studio hours, and where they can participate in co-op gallery activities. Such studio space should include larger studios than are now available at NuArts or the Lichtenstein. Such studio spaces should also accommodate a wide range of artistic media: this will likely require amenities now not available in existing Pittsfield arts-focused building such as freight elevator, extra ventilation, high ceiling space, wide hallways and door openings to move large scale work, as well as sound proofing for any spaces used for performing arts studios, rehearsal or performance space.

It is possible to secure funding for municipal development and operation of such a facility. Grant funds from entities such as ArtPlace (a consortium of 14 foundations, 8 federal agencies, and six financial institutions) are available to well-planned ventures in Massachusetts: seven such ventures are among the finalists for 2014 grants of up to $1 million. At least one of the 2014 Massachusetts finalists has developed a plan for a self-sustaining Makers Place that could be looked at as a model. (Brickbottom Square, Summerville)
ARTIST NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In tandem with the analysis of available spaces, ArtsMarket conducted an analysis of artist needs. Two surveys were developed and administered electronically and promoted via email blasts, Facebook and Twitter: one survey was focused exclusively on out-of-town artists seeking prospective space and the other, primary survey was focused on artists working in the Berkshires. Ultimately, this survey was also answered by artists currently residing outside of the Berkshires who had heard about the study.

Fifty seven artists responded to the survey concerning individual artist needs, and 17 concerning organizational needs. While visual artists were the largest respondent group, musicians and theater artists also reported need for space beyond their current space. Also, visual artists working in large scale media – sculpture, metal and glass, wood, and other mixed media were a significant part of the respondent pool. Writers and graphic artists responded as well.

N = 57: some artists work in more than one medium
In addition and in keeping with the overall dialogue with the arts community, theatre directors and producers representing their own companies were the largest group of organizational leaders responding to the survey.

If you are responding to this survey as representative of an ensemble or multi-person group, please check the box(es) that most closely represent your group’s art work.

N = 17
As we see below, most artists – as well as art group leaders, currently work at home. “I do this because I have no other option,” one respondent noted, “and I would much rather work in a place with other artists. I haven’t been able to find space like that in Pittsfield. The existing studio spaces are too small or filled with waiting lists.” Another artist wrote, “I would like to be able to work somewhere that people come for open studios. I can’t do that in my own home. I would like the visibility and sales opportunities it would provide.” And finally, an artist-director of an organization said that “I need places to meet with people in planning a production. I need rehearsal spaces.” As to be expected from these comments, 73% of the respondents want to move to better or different space than they now use.

“I haven’t been able to finish my work(s) because I lack the space to get it done.”
Their reasons for needing different space are varied, but important. The largest group of respondents simply want to work in a building where there are other creative artists: this relates directly to the isolation factor of working at home, as stated by many respondents. And, twelve artists specifically noted, in addition, that they need to move their studio space out of their homes. Others, including quite a few that now use artist studio space in existing buildings in Pittsfield, need larger space than they can find. Still others need equipment or amenities, or both, that they can’t find in their current location. These include loading space, elevators or freight elevators, good light and ventilation, rehearsal studios, and lockable storage space.

“I currently work out of my home as a visual artist and my public presence is unseen. I would love space in the Upstreet Cultural District to better present myself to the public-at-large.”

“Pittsfield needs more collaborative creative spaces for artists to come out of isolation. Also, more retail galleries to sell artwork, and opportunities for artists to show work or share space in exchange for contributing talents/skills to the community. Pittsfield is an ideal spot for cohesion amongst artists, art dealers and community. It's edgy but not too high brow, very appealing to artists. I live in GB but am looking for a live/work space in Pittsfield. Keep the art momentum going!”
Artist were asked to complete a live-work section of the survey if they were interested in finding live-work space. A total of 44 responded to this portion of the survey, of which only 1 now resides in a live-work building. The mode response for monthly amount currently paid for living space was $801-$1000.
Artists seeking live work space were asked what special features they need: as can be seen, ventilation, light, soundproofing, high ceilings – all items to be anticipated – were most frequently cited, along with ability to move freight in an elevator and through a loading area. The additional needs cited include: three-phase electricity, high speed internet, chemically non-toxic/ventilation to remove art-based toxins; and pet friendly. Artists also noted that a common area and/or co-operative gallery space (or both) would be an advantage.

“Because metal working involves welding, plasma cutting, grinders, torches, the matter of smells, toxicity, and spark/fire proofing are an issue.”
Artists responding to the survey were asked to share median income information to help planners evaluate the feasibility of using low income housing financing mechanisms. Fifty eight percent of the respondents said they would qualify for low income housing, and 42% would not, suggesting that a building or buildings offering a range of options – below market and at market rent, or below market combined with limited equity ownership for some units – would be a viable approach.
In the final portion of the survey, artists and arts organization leaders were asked to share their views on the amount of space available in Pittsfield. The closure of some retail galleries has worried many artists who are committed to remaining in Pittsfield. Even community venues such as restaurants that show art work, libraries, etc., are in short supply.

“The Artswalk event is terrific, but I would like to have my work in traditional galleries.”

NEED: EDUCATION SPACE

Artists were asked how good the spaces they currently use are in meeting the needs they have as performers and arts educators. Artists noted that their current spaces limit their ability to teach, and present performing arts.

“I teach classes in my studio in Stockbridge and am hoping to expand the # of classes I offer.”

“I need a workshop/teaching area. You can’t find any in Pittsfield.”

“A facility where I could teach classes would be excellent. I cannot offer educational programs.”

“I am interested in a larger loft-like studio space with heat and electricity, bathroom and wash sink. I have been wanting to teach more workshops in a space in Pittsfield. With space I would be able to.”
“There is a need for more community art workshops and paint-in's. I don't know of even one single Pittsfield based artist group that allows free or low cost access to a space for the purpose of getting artists together to paint/draw and learn from one another: there are never any workshops for painting/drawing listed at the Lichtenstein center. The only group that does anything remotely similar is in Great Barrington/Sheffield. They charge a very small fee of $10 and meet every week.”

NEED: STUDIO SPACE

“Pittsfield likes to consider itself "The Brooklyn of the Berkshires," and indeed it has its share of cultural institutions and endeavors. But we have to be honest with ourselves and acknowledge that we are not, nor will we ever be - Brooklyn. Currently, there are no retail galleries on North Street. High end clothiers cannot sustain a business there. Still, property owners charge steep rent on storefronts, often preferring to leave spots empty than lower prices. Businesses spring up and collapse in less than a year. Start-up businesses need the support of many factors - flexible landlords, tax incentives, media exposure, word of mouth, and support from the rest of the local economy. Yet, joining Downtown, Inc. is an expense few new businesses can bear, and fewer still see the benefits of joining. What can we do to assist these (artist) small businesses, including maker spaces and galleries, which are the true economic engines of the city?”

“Given the issues involved with large metal works, shared industrial space with 220 volt circuits, separate from living quarters is needed. One would need to be able to secure one's equipment while perhaps sharing certain other types. At present, if it is open, I use the machine shop at Taconic High School. Whether it would be possible to combine vocational space with art/creative space might be worth considering given the school department's ambitious desires.”

“The primary problem with artist’s space is cost. Most artists have very little extra money for rehearsal or studio space. Many cities in Europe adapt old factories and rent spaces to artists at a low cost. Can’t we do that?”

“I believe there is a need for more galleries or spaces to showcase art and/or other creative enterprises.”

“I feel Pittsfield needs a less expensive studio live/work/workshop building for artists to rent.”

“It seems like Pittsfield has two buildings that house artists’ studios: the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts and the Arts on North spaces –NuArts. The spaces in both these buildings tend to be small and probably work great if you're an artist working by yourself. If you have employees (I have one) and need a slightly larger space - 500 to 600 Sq. - the space in these buildings is not really adequate. It also seems to me that there isn't a lot of turnover in these buildings. At one point in time there was a waiting list to get into the Arts on North building. I believe Pittsfield could benefit from a third building that would house artist studios. This could simply be a building with individual workspaces for rent with anywhere from ten to fifteen spaces in the same building. Building spaces that come to
mind include; 1) Rent-a-Center on the corner of North St. and Linden St. The second floor of this building appears to be empty. It has large windows and probably could be subdivided to smaller spaces. 2) Zion Lutheran Church (the church on First St. by the entrance to the Commons). There is a separate building on the left side of the church that I believe is vacant and owned by the church. 3) There is a decommissioned firehouse on Tyler St. I don’t know a lot about this building but seems like something worth checking into.”

“As a playwright, director, producer, teaching arts, I seek a small venue to produce my work. As a teaching artist, I seek appropriate space for classes in acting, dance and creative writing.”

**NEED: LIVE WORK SPACE**

“Above all artist live/work spaces or more affordable studios are needed to push Pittsfield forward in the art scene. Spaces should accommodate the need for sinks/water, technological and power equipment and proximity to other artists. And places for large installations. For artists working in isolation, creative support is needed - places to meet, learn/study, shop, work and live. More galleries on North St. of varying types would create a colorful composite for art buyers to peruse. I'd like to see a modern art supply store on North St (other than Miller Supply) that sold the latest materials and featured local artisans.”

“I've lived in Boston for twenty years now, but am originally from Lenox. The cost of space here (in Boston) is very high. However, there are some good projects which help address the cost of tooling and space, such as the Artisan's Asylum in Somerville. These types of Maker Spaces (also misnamed Hacker Spaces) would be most useful for Pittsfield. I have recently bought a building in Pittsfield (56 John Street) which I plan on renovating and using as a workspace, but the creation of a collaborative organization to share costs would be great.”

**NEED: PERFORMING ARTS SPACE**

“The existing theatre spaces here are great. The Museum space is hard to work in, but they are wonderful to us. Barrington Stage’s St. Germain theater is getting increasingly booked to the point where we can’t fit in, and I see that getting more and more the case.”

“It would be nice to have a place where groups such as the Sweet Adelines, Berkshire Hillsmen, Choral groups, and children’s singing groups could use to rehearse, where risers could be permanently set up and storage space provided for music, costumes, etc. Having a stage area with a place for guests to sit and watch would be nice but not necessary.”

“Churches here are accommodating, but there really is no other space to use for music.”

“A Signature Theatre type venue in association with Berkshire Community College that is near North Street, would be an incredible investment and addition to Cultural Upstreet
“We can’t expand. Pittsfield could become the theatre center of the Berkshires. We are that close to it. But there is no space, and when there is space – like upstairs at Beacon Cinema – the City shuts it down. It is as though the City doesn’t want theater to expand. But we bring people in and they eat dinner here and park here and even shop here.”

“What we need is a theatre center of some sort. Yes, there are visual art studio needs. But there is a greater need for performance space here. Shire City Sanctuary is the only alternative left, and it can’t be a place where you have permanent lighting or sound. If Pittsfield wants to be a cultural draw the way they say it does, it should at least take the lead in creating a theater building. Too bad that we lost the theater where they have the Senior Center: it would be ideal given its location so close to Barrington Stage. But somehow, we need a rentable space where you can perform two or three times a year – a rotating space with other groups. This really needs to be examined.”

“I want to be located in Pittsfield for a lot of reasons, rather than in Lenox or Great Barrington. I don’t want theater space there: I want it here.”

“The biggest barrier to more art space in Pittsfield is meeting City code. The City needs to work with the arts community on this rather than be a barrier to it.”
MESHING NEEDS AND POSSIBILITIES

The previous section of this report quoted artists who iterated four distinct needs: teaching space; studio space; live work space; and performance/gallery space. In dialogue with the consultant, they also noted that many buildings in Pittsfield could become used for these purposes, but that oftentimes zoning and especially code issues stand in the way.

Focusing on a priority ventures such as: 1) making the Lichtenstein more accommodating for arts education and small performances; 2) developing a theatre space or spaces in another downtown location; and 3) identifying a building for studio and live work space could take the Art District to the next level of success.

THREATS TO AND WEAKNESSES OF EXISTING SPACE

As artist comments and these photos show, there is little teaching room at the Lichtenstein, but considerable need. Existing education space is so crowded that there is literally no more room for student art work. Space that could potentially be used has become de facto storage space, on every floor except the main floor.
NuArts Studios are small, as illustrated here and noted by artists throughout the study. While they are highly valued by those able to rent them, these studios do not meet the needs of artists who work in large scale media or artists who work collaboratively. These spaces are also too small to use as teaching spaces.

The small work spaces at NuArts limit the types of art work that can be created there and limits the number of people that can be in each studio. Artists cannot teach out of these spaces, nor can they employ others in their art businesses.

Given the need for these specific types of space, the City may want to consider a two-pronged approach: undertaking a feasibility study or studies for the creation of a new municipal art facilities in association with upgrading the Lichtenstein; and working to build developer and or
artist/developed interest in undertaking an artist live work and studio facility in one of the most applicable facilities. And, it may be wise to do both of these in the context of a larger cultural plan that evaluates all current programs, services, gaps, and assets and can better assess level of need for services such as arts education programming, public performances and performance space, community access to programming and more than this study made possible.

ZONING AND CODE/PERMIT ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

The City has already seen the need and opportunity for gradual expansion of the Arts Overlay District borders. It may well be that the various needs for different types of art spaces identified by resident artists and by those seeking to move to Pittsfield suggest the need for further district expansion. For example, among visual artists, there is need for space that would fit within light industrial zoning – the type of space that accommodates artists working in metal, ceramics, or with large presses. Performing artists would love the type of facility that allows performance space and public space on a main floor with live work space above. These diverse needs and opportunities may lead to creation of a border district that meshes light industrial and art/creative space, and/or of buildings that have specific variances for combined public space use, studios, and live work space all in the same building – for example, if the models of adaptive reuse of Masonic Temple buildings noted here are to be developed.

The City of Pittsfield has a reputation among artists and nonprofit arts organizations of being extremely strict and rigid in regard to permitting art space. This has deterred artists from considering purchase of buildings that would need to be re-permitted. Stories such as the requirement that Shire City install a sprinkler system in what had been the church sanctuary because the City views a performance venue differently than a church venue have circulated throughout the arts community. Berkshire Theatre Company’s efforts to repurpose the former bed and breakfast that it purchased into temporary lodging for artists – again facing the City’s requirement of installing sprinkler systems throughout – is also well known. So too is the City’s closure of New Stage Theatre Company’s space on the second floor of the Beacon Cinema. This closure is viewed with particular irony in that the City has not been in favor of transforming street level spaces into theatre venues that wouldn’t be regularly open. As one artist interviewee stated in an interview for this study, “If we can’t use the Beacon second floor space, and what Shire City has gone through trying to make that

The Fringe Festival concept started in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1947 as an alternative to the Edinburgh International Festival, and the concept has spread throughout the world, including many in the US. Well done Fringe Festivals can attract thousands of visitors. Fringe Festivals are focused on the performing arts: Theater, dance, puppetry, spoken word and the like make up the Fringe core, but festivals often may include film and visual arts elements. Fringes don’t have a focus on a single discipline or genre, but are a performing-arts smorgasbord. They are easy to participate in: Ticket prices are low for audiences and production fees are low for artists. They last from just a few days to a few weeks and involve lots of people at multiple venues. Fringes feature a huge array of original material. Typically, tech is minimal and time is a factor at Fringe festivals.

There are some twenty five Fringe Festivals in the US. Some run for only a few days each year in pop up theatre spaces that occupy 25 viewers. Others are huge: The Orlando Fringe Festival attracts 29,000 visitors a year – the largest arts participation in Orlando.
space meet code, and the City is against main floor theatre space, does Pittsfield really want theatre here? Does it realize that more theatre brings in more economic activity?"

A representative from another organization, Shakespeare in the Parks, spoke of the annual challenge of getting all the permit signatures, in correct order, to produce the programming that it offers free to the public, noting that it can take days of trying to meet up with city staff. A streamlined system would be helpful in furthering arts programs.

While the City’s permit requirements are well-grounded in safety concerns, the arts community seeks a middle ground – a stronger and positive working relationship with the City.

**PUBLIC ART POLICY AND PLAN**

In addition to prioritizing the location and development of key centers for studios, arts education, performance and gallery space, the City has the opportunity to formalize what has been an ad hoc approach to public art placement into a public art policy and program that work together with a facilities strategy to provide lasting economic benefit within the Arts District and surrounding neighborhoods. A public art plan that includes priority locations for works as well as a funding plan should be developed through the City’s Office of Cultural Development. There are numerous models of public-private joint funding for public art that can be used. A focus should be on defining the Arts District and its major venues. The attractive median strips throughout the district could be excellent places for appropriately scaled work.

![Define the southern end of the district with public art.](image)
A comprehensive public art plan for Pittsfield should include a policy as to how the City will fund the commissioning and siting of work, the quality and scope of work, and how it will preserve and fund protection and on-going maintenance of work. There are many diverse funding models, including private sector funding and bequests or honorary gifts, a pooled fund, use of dedicated funding as a percent or fractional percent of public works and capital investment funds, a portion of hospitality tax funds, a percent of private development funds, and other mechanisms.

Typically, a public art plan or public art master plan includes conditions evaluation of existing works of public art including monuments and statues. A public art plan often identifies not only the type of key defining locations noted above, but also underutilized and neglected spaces in which a work of public art can literally serve as an economic engine, transforming the space and increasing the desirability of surrounding parcels and buildings.
Pittsfield’s public art plan should create a process for the City to evaluate the condition of and prioritize conservation of existing work; should create a process for prioritizing locations for new work; should identify allowed funding mechanisms; should create a panel and jury system for selecting artists and commissioning work by them; and should promote the use of public art by residents as cultural touchstones, educational opportunities, neighborhood definitions, and tourism opportunities. A plan should also address standards and protocols for any private sector commissioned work placed in public areas, and should address protocols for any future deaccessioning of public art works.

PUBLIC ART AND CIVIC ART PROGRAMMING ENCOURAGING ART INTEREST

One of the many advantages of a public art program is that the addition of art to a community encourages public interest in the arts in general. Much has been documented of the importance of public art in transforming the way a community thinks of itself, and on how public art encourages an interest in art that extends to people feeling more comfortable going into and purchasing work from galleries and enrolling their children in art classes.

Increased arts classes for youth and people of all ages is another important element in encouraging transformed community values. A facility such as the Lichtenstein can become a huge draw for youth arts classes, and in youth art exhibits perhaps even paired with “make public art” programs. While these are most typically school or classroom based projects, having a facility such as the Lichtenstein sponsor family or youth public arts projects offers the City a wonderful opportunity.

The City’s First Thursdays at one point were largely arts based but have become less so over time. Art focused events can boost interest, once again, in truly arts based public celebrations.

ECONOMIC VALUE OF ESTABLISHING ADDITIONAL SPACES

In 2010, Americans for the Arts conducted its second assessment of the economic value of the arts in Pittsfield, finding that the establishment of the Arts District and the City’s investment in the restoration of the Colonial Theatre, expansion of the Berkshire Museum, locating both Berkshire Theatre Group and Barrington Stage in Pittsfield, and other related investments had yielded a 48.6% overall growth in economic value of the arts to the community.
In the four years since then, these investments have continued to pay off. Looking ahead: there is the planned expansion of facilities by Berkshire Theatre Group, the additional possible expansion of spaces by Berkshire Museum, the possible impact of transforming the Lichtenstein, adding the Masonic Temple, creating a sizable live work facility and related gallery, and establishing additional art work space. We estimate that these planned and possible expansions and additions to the overlay district could again net nearly 50% growth of economic value to the City, from $25.3 million and 760 jobs to at least $45 million and 1100 direct and induced or ripple effect jobs. This would yield $5.9 million in local tax revenue and a nearly equal amount in state tax revenue, each up by $4.8 million since 2010.

This value could have its own ripple effect in positioning Pittsfield as an intensely creative city and thus attracting for profit creative industries. And, it has a further and as yet undocumented impact by increasing property values in the overlay district and thus yielding increased overall property tax value. Property values also increase when there are assets such as arts education offerings for students, which could be furthered if there is more arts education space. Finally, a greater density and thoughtful positioning of public art work makes retail and restaurant locations more attractive, increasing these revenues and related rentals.

Essentially, it is economically advantageous for the City to play a lead role in furthering additional art spaces through either direct investment and/or encouraging developers or building owners to transform existing spaces into the type of art spaces noted in this report.

RESOURCES

There are many resources available to the City of Pittsfield as well as developers and artists interested in potentially developing spaces as coops.

In addition to its Cultural Facilities grant program, the Massachusetts Cultural Council lists additional state resources for artist space development. [http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/services/cultural_districts_resources.asp](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/services/cultural_districts_resources.asp)

The Kresge Foundation funds artist spaces nation-wide. [http://kresge.org/programs/arts-culture](http://kresge.org/programs/arts-culture)

Partners for Sacred Places offers counsel for organizations seeking to use church sanctuaries for art. [www.sacredplaces.org](http://www.sacredplaces.org)

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2 The Americans for the Arts methodology does not include analysis of baseline and increased property tax value. It only includes direct and induced spending and employment from the nonprofit cultural organizations and their audiences or participants. It also does not track the impact of individual artists. Our projections here include the value of individual artists living and working in the district as well as expanded facilities for arts performance, gallery, and educational use.
The National Trust for Historic Preservation offers grants and counsel to nonprofits seeking to restore and adapt historic buildings. [http://blog.preservationnation.org/2013/01/14/find-funding-how-to-apply-for-grants-from-the-national-trust-preservation-fund/#.URQE6aW5N8E](http://blog.preservationnation.org/2013/01/14/find-funding-how-to-apply-for-grants-from-the-national-trust-preservation-fund/#.URQE6aW5N8E)

ArtSpace is a nationally recognized nonprofit developer of artist live work spaces, with successful live work spaces developed in scores of communities from coast to coast. [www.artspace.org](http://www.artspace.org)

Artist Space Development: Financing is an excellent report from the Urban Institute. [http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/1001175_asd_financing.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/1001175_asd_financing.pdf)