

Somerville Arts Council Re-Visioning

Mission

The mission of the Somerville Arts Council is to cultivate and celebrate the creative expressions of the Somerville community. Through innovative collaborations and quality programming we work to make the arts an integral part of life reflective of our diverse city. – Revised, June 2008

2008 Re-Visioning Process

The Somerville Arts Council (SAC) launched its re-visioning process in 2008 to reflect upon its past, refine its mission, and seek a renewal in outlook to further its work within the community. The re-visioning process gathered information from artists and community members about their perception of the Council and its understanding of the artistic and cultural “assets” and “needs” of our diverse community.

This is a visual map that sums up the process to date:



Historical Context

The Somerville Arts Council was established in 1980 as the Local Cultural Council (LCC) for the City of Somerville. The original role of the Council was to serve as a “grass-roots” volunteer group that would

re-grant state funds to support local cultural projects. From its inception, **SAC was designed to empower community members to improve the quality of life in their city through developing and supporting the arts and culture.**

Community Focus

In a city with extremely limited resources, the Council runs with a staff of 2.5 full time employees and utilizes extensive volunteer energy, which in turn provides increased support for its work in Somerville. The process by which the Council relates to the community is central to its end product; by keeping a very close ear to the ground, council members discern untapped pockets of talent and opportunity that directly determine its diverse programming.

Project Framework

By acknowledging different phases of growth in individuals and projects, the Council is able to recognize a wide spectrum of potential. When determining allocation of resource, council members consider a balance of proven assets and latent needs that, if addressed, could enhance the quality of life in Somerville. The framework for determining projects includes three areas:

Illuminate

Programs and strategies that celebrate an already existing asset in the community.

Foster

Programs and strategies that cultivate and nurture a potential or emerging asset.

Enhance

Programs and strategies that address an area of community need.

Existing Projects

Illuminate

Programs and strategies that celebrate an already existing asset in the community.



Illuminations Tour

a festive tribute to the colorful, folk art light displays created by Somerville residents at the darkest time of year.



ArtBeat Festival

utilizes a theme and conducts community outreach, providing a means to showcase our diverse creative community.



Switchbox Project

brings the work of Somerville artists out of the studios and onto city streets.

Foster

Programs and strategies that cultivate and nurture a potential or emerging asset.



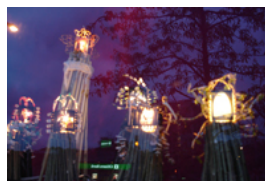
LCC grants

support local artists, arts organizations and community groups with administered funds from the Mass Cultural Council.



ArtsUnion

seeks to enhance the character and economic development opportunities for the Union Square community.



Windows Art Project

addresses Somerville's shortage of exhibition space, making the arts accessible to a broad audience in storefront windows.

Technical Assistance

offers information and referral, advocacy services to the public, artists and local organizations.

Exhibits & Calls to Artists

Describe

Enhance

Programs and strategies that address an area of community need.



Books of Hope

is a literacy and teen-empowerment 10-month program held at the Mystic Housing Development.



Art in a Garden

focuses on art, the environment, and gardening through a free six-week summer "camp".



Mystic Mural Project

offers teens the opportunity to acquire awareness of the natural world by using the Mystic River as a classroom, in an interdisciplinary program.

Projects Ideas from Re-Visioning

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Illuminate</i> <i>Programs and strategies that celebrate an already existing asset in the community.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Foster</i> <i>Programs and strategies that cultivate and nurture a potential or emerging asset.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Enhance</i> <i>Programs and strategies that address an area of community need.</i></p>
<p>Calls to Artists: 1) Organize a small press showcase event. 2) Continue to create events and happenings that promote art as an opportunity for creative expression available to everyone.</p> <p>Programs: Create more tours, like the Somerville Open Studios tour but for other genres</p> <p>Publications: 1) Publicize studies demonstrating the economic benefits of the arts to Somerville. 2) Create a SAC brochure that highlights the individual fellowship program.</p> <p>Promotion: 1) Put “local author” stickers on library books. Create a local author section in the library or otherwise highlight local literary work. 2) Showcase one local artist each month on the city website, the SAC website, and/or the local newspapers. 3) Promote a local book of the year.</p> <p>Operations: Create a citywide web site with common calendars promoting art events and happenings.</p>	<p>Assistance: 1) Create a clearinghouse of potential rehearsal spaces. Help existing venues make their spaces more accessible to a greater number of artists and audiences. 2) Promote the use of SCAT resources by more artists. 3) Add information or links to the SAC website on publishing and editing.</p> <p>Calls to Artists: 1) Help organize more film screenings and events with workshops or panels that connect the audience with the filmmaker. 2) Help to organize readings and other opportunities for writers to network. 3) Continue to design and implement arts-based events that bridge the gap between various constituencies.</p> <p>Programs: 1) Establish arts and literature based mentoring programs. 2) Create a citywide book club. 3) Create a public art fund and registry.</p> <p>Publications: Create a how-to guide for obtaining permits in the city. Encourage the city to streamline its permitting process around venues and art events.</p> <p>Education: Encourage the school department to hire a citywide Arts Coordinator.</p>	<p>Assistance: 1) “Greg’s List” - Create a centralized, on-line, resource to connect artists and the community. 2) Work with the city to ensure that new public spaces, such as schools and libraries include high quality performance spaces. 3) Advocate for the creation of city or state subsidized venues, galleries and rehearsal spaces. 4) Do more outreach to underserved constituencies. Promote resources available to support <i>their</i> art making. 5) Increase focus in East Somerville - lend expertise to East Somerville Main Streets.</p> <p>Calls to Artists: Organize art happenings designed to bridge the gaps in the community.</p> <p>Programs: 1) Create series of regular film events. 2) Create a Poet Laureate position in Somerville. 2) Create a mural project for youth in East Somerville.</p> <p>Operations: Create a system to better organize volunteers.</p> <p>Education: Use performing arts in schools to integrate students and break down barriers.</p>