



LINDEN  
HOLY CROSS CEMETERY

REVERE

WOODLAWN CEMETERY

BEACHLAND PARK

REVERE HIGHLANDS

POWATAN PARK

WASHINGTON

THE HEIGHTS

SALES CREEK

2

CHELSEA

ORIENT HEIGHTS

1

CHESAPEAKE RIVER

BISLANDS

WINTHROP

EAST BOSTON  
BOSTON

EAST BOSTON CO.

EAST BOSTON COMPANY



# Historic and Cultural Resources

**“A city is a place where there is no need to wait for next week to get the answer to a question, to taste the food of any country, to find new voices to listen to and familiar ones to listen to again.”**

**— Margaret Mead<sup>1</sup>**

## Introduction

The purpose of comprehensive planning is to improve the well-being and quality-of-life for a community's residents by setting a shared vision for the future and identifying goals and strategies to achieve that shared vision. Building a sense of meaning, purpose, and belonging among diverse communities is critical to improving well-being and bringing residents together to work toward a common purpose. History and culture are the foundations for that work, and influence and are influenced by each of the elements of the Master Plan, from economic development to transportation.

History, its layers of memories, investments, and activities – some remembered, some forgotten—has shaped the built environment, social fabric, and civic dynamics of Revere. It can serve as a reminder of the city's strengths and its challenges. Culture is made up of the rich, diverse, and creative activities that bring residents together around shared meaning, values, foods, and aesthetics. Given this definition, this chapter strives to encompass the wide breadth of cultural life in Revere, from arts & culture performances, events, and festivals, to the variety of cultural expressions seen in the daily lives of the citizens of Revere.

The Historic and Cultural Resources section of this plan sets the context for both history and culture in Revere. It describes the history of Revere, the places, objects, and sites that have been recognized for their historic significance, and the organizations active in remembering and preserving Revere's history. It also identifies the arts and cultural events, enterprises, activities, and organizations active in Revere today, documenting the challenges and concerns related to equitable cultural preservation and enhancement. The chapter concludes with strategies to strengthen preservation efforts and ensure the enhancement of cultural resources in Revere.

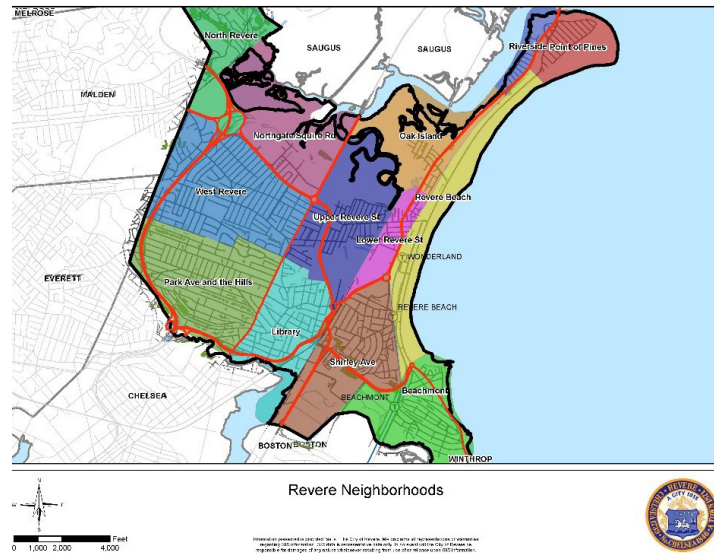
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1 “Margaret Mead Quotes.” Quotes.net. STANDS4 LLC, 2019. Web. 30 Dec. 2019. <<https://www.quotes.net/quote/6666>>.



## Historic and Cultural Context

Revere's coastline and salt marshes and its proximity to both Boston and Lynn have shaped its historical development patterns over generations. Each of the city's eleven neighborhoods has distinct histories and development patterns, and has developed a unique identity given their location, immigration patterns, and institutions; however, this chapter provides an overview of the larger context and key points in the city's development as a whole.



### LANDS OF THE PAWTUCKET CONFEDERATION

The city of Revere is situated within the ancestral lands of the Native American families and tribes allied in the Pawtucket Confederation. The Mystic (Missituk) river systems and salt marshes were important for organizing the areas of settlement and patterns of movement of these largely agrarian tribes. After the death of Sachem Nanepashemet, ruler of the Pawtucket Confederation, in 1619, his widow, Squaw Sachem, and sons formed alliances with the English settlers, likely to secure protection against raids by the Tarrantine tribes of Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Revere was an area of extensive contact between early colonists and Nanepashemet's oldest son, Wonohaquaham, known to the colonists as Sagamore John. Wonohaquaham was the leader of tribal lands known as Winnisimmet (the land where the salt waters flow), including the lands around the Mystic River and the salt marshes along the coastline running north of Boston. He and his people were known to the colonists as the Rumney Marsh Indians and most died during a smallpox outbreak in 1633. On his deathbed, he is said to have entrusted his son's education to the colonial pastor, Mr. Wilson, though the child is noted to have died shortly afterward.<sup>2</sup>

### EARLY ENGLISH SETTLEMENT IN RUMNEY MARSH

Rumney Marsh was first explored by white settlers when Captain John Smith traversed the coast of New England in 1614 and became a site of early English farming settlements on the lands held by the Pawtucket Confederation. In 1634, Rumney Marsh, Winnisimmet (Chelsea), and Pullen Poynt (later known as Winthrop) were annexed to Boston.<sup>3</sup> This annexation represented a turning point in which the

1 Piotrowski, Tadeusz. (2002) "Introduction: The Northeast," in *The Indian heritage of New Hampshire and northern New England*. Ed. Tadeusz Piotrowski. Jefferson, NC: MacFarland.

2 Thatcher, Benjamin Bussey. (1839) *Indian Biography*, Vol. II. New York, NY: Harper and Brothers. Accessed via Google Books. Pp. 11-16.

3 Secretary of the Commonwealth, Division of Public Records. (1920) *Historical Data Relating to Counties, Cities, and Towns in Massachusetts*. Boston, MA: Wright and Potter Printing Co. Digitized September 23, 2008, 73 pages.



Massachusetts government claimed land rights that were previously presumed to be held by the Pawtucket Confederation (based on Sagamores' agreements granting settlement permissions at various sites) claimed land rights that were previously presumed to be held by the Pawtucket Confederation (based on Sagamores' agreements granting settlement permissions at various sites). Sagamore John's younger brother Wenepoykin, known as Sagamore George, unsuccessfully petitioned the Massachusetts courts in 1651 to recognize his claims to his brother's annexed lands.<sup>4</sup>

### SLAVERY IN RUMNEY MARSH

Slavery was an established part of colonial life in Massachusetts,<sup>5</sup> and bond-slavery was established as a tool for elevating the rights and privileges of white settlers above those of the indigenous people, African slaves, and their descendants through the Body of Liberties of the Massachusetts Colony in New England, ratified in 1641.<sup>6</sup> The sale of African slaves within Massachusetts has been dated to 1644. The long continuation of slavery in Revere has been documented by historian Jeff Perlman, whose research led to the recognition and memorial to thirteen slaves who were buried along the northern wall of the cemetery in the nineteenth century.



Figure 1: Geo. H. Walker & Co. *Map of Chelsea, Everett, Revere, & Winthrop*. Boston, Mass: Geo. H. Walker & Co., 1897. Web. 21 Feb 2019. <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/9s161925q>.

### DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS IN RUMNEY MARSH

The area's expansive salt marshes were a prominent environmental feature that limited dense settlement. Through its incorporation within Chelsea in 1739, Rumney Marsh remained a relatively stable, rural community situated between the activity centers of Lynn and Boston and remained such until the nineteenth century. A record of Chelsea's history indicates that the name Rumney Marsh was favored for many years after its incorporation as the Town of Chelsea.<sup>7</sup>

### FROM NORTH CHELSEA TO THE TOWN OF REVERE

The use of Revere Beach as a pleasure resort began in 1834 when the first small tavern was built in the Point of Pines area for the enjoyment of athletes. The population of the area remained small, between four

Accessed August 15, 2019 on Google Books. Pp 60-61.

4 Wenepoykin. (2005) "This Land's First Nation: The Massachusett." The Menotomy Journal. Arlington.

5 Moore, George Henry. (1866) Notes on the History of Slavery in Massachusetts. New York, D. Appleton & Co. pp. 3-5.

6 Ibid, pp. 11-18.

7 Langworthy, Isaac Pendleton. (1866) A Historical Discourse, Delivered at Chelsea, Mass., Sept. 20, 1866, At the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Winnisimmet Congregational Church. Boston, MA: JA Butler.



hundred and eight hundred residents, until after the completion of the Eastern Railroad in 1838 (later to become the Boston and Maine Railroad). The resulting growth precipitated Revere's founding in 1846 as a separate town of around nine hundred residents named North Chelsea. The town changed its name to "Revere" in 1871 after the patriot, Paul Revere. The salt marshes that gave Revere its original name of Rumney Marsh constrained historic neighborhood development and promoted healthy land and ocean ecosystems.



Figure 2: *Ocean Avenue Trolley, built circa 1854, changed to trackless trolley in 1952 and eliminated in 1955 (Source: Wikipedia, "Boston Area Street-car lines." Image courtesy of City of Revere.*

### **RAILROADS: ENGINES OF GROWTH**

Completion of the Boston, Revere Beach and Lynn Railroad (the Narrow Gauge) in 1875

signaled the beginning of rapid population growth for the town and the development of the Beach as a summer resort, given the increased accessibility the railroads provided. By 1881, a group of prominent Massachusetts men formed a company and purchased 200 acres of land in the Point of Pines. They invested \$500,000 in a complete summer resort, hotels, bandstand, racetrack, amusements, piers, and bathhouses. Using gas jets and special globes, they provided gaslight illumination through beautiful arches above the walks and driveways. Over 2,000 people were present at opening ceremonies for the Pines Hotel, considered the largest on the Atlantic Coast at the time. The Great Ocean Pier was constructed in 1881, along with the opening of the Pines Hotel. By this time, the beach had become a lively and heavily used resort area, but given that the railroad tracks and several beach structures were close to the water at high tide, the pier was not safe. The Metropolitan Park Commission (later the Metropolitan District Commission and now the Department of Conservation and Recreation) took over management of Revere Beach in 1896, creating the Revere Beach Reservation as part of a redevelopment effort by the Commonwealth that involved a westward relocation of the Narrow Gauge Railroad.

By 1897, the impact of the railroad lines and Revere Beach on the physical layout and structure of Revere was apparent. Heavy rail and streetcar networks connected Revere's neighborhoods and commercial centers to East Boston, Chelsea, and Lynn. Three trolley lines connected Revere Beach to Maverick Square, and another connected the beach to Broadway. Development largely concentrated along the railroad lines, adjacent to Revere Beach and expanding out from the central spine of Broadway with nodes around Town Hall and where the Broadway and Malden streetcar lines connected.

### **CULTURAL GROWTH IN AN IMMIGRANT CITY**

Revere is proud of its heritage as a home to immigrant enclaves in the early twentieth century. Access to affordable housing near-natural environments and rail-access to employment centers drew an influx of European immigrants, notably, Jewish immigrants from Poland and Russia, and Italian immigrants. The great Chelsea Fire of 1908 displaced many Jewish immigrants from Chelsea, who took refuge in the Shirley Avenue area and helped usher in the development of neighborhood's triple-decker vernacular.

Designated historic resources in Revere largely reflect the civic infrastructure and aesthetic from this period in the city's history – its steady growth from a town of under one thousand residents to a bustling city of



twenty times that when it incorporated as a city in 1914. Many resources with historic designations reflect the cultural heritage of the city's immigrant communities — for example, the first St. Anthony of Padua Church was constructed at 235 Revere Street to serve the city's Italian community in 1926 and replaced with the current structure at 250 Revere St. in 1943. Religious institutions and practices organized the rhythms of immigrant community life in Revere, and the buildings that housed these institutions still hold important cultural meaning for many of Revere's residents.

During this period, Revere Beach became a regional destination for culture and recreation. The Metropolitan Park Commission opened the beach to the public in 1896. Wonderland Amusement Park brought a major regional amusement and entertainment destination to Revere. By the 1920s, it was a major entertainment and recreation destination with restaurants, ballrooms, dance halls, and amusement parks featuring well-known roller coasters, including the Cyclone, the Lighting, and the Derby Racer.

### **ROWE QUARRY**

Located in the northwest corner of Revere, on the border of Malden, the Rowe Quarry covered almost 100 acres, 54 of which were in Revere. The land was purchased from the Perini Corporation in 1907. The facility employed advanced technology, including pneumatic drilling techniques used throughout the New England states. At its peak, 500,000 tons of material were mined each year. Materials produced at the site, such as concrete mix, asphalt and materials for drainage, were used throughout Massachusetts including in the Prudential Center, the Christian Science Mother Church and the infield at Fenway Park. The facility was torn down in 2002 and was redeveloped into the Overlook Ridge apartment complex.

### **INFILL AND THE RISE OF THE AUTOMOBILE**

From the time of Revere's incorporation as a city in 1914 until the 1970s, Revere's growth continued. The most rapid period of growth and residential development occurred after World War II. Between 1960 and 1980, most of the development that occurred in Revere was on former farmland, much of which was undeveloped in 1960. The majority of the land is now built up and fully developed. This period of growth was accompanied by a shift from the transit networks that shaped Revere's compact neighborhoods to a transportation network that favored the automobile. Transit service declined significantly in the 1930s with the closure of the Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway service in 1935 and was further eroded in 1936 by the closure of the trolley line between Revere City Hall and Beachmont. In 1952, the last streetcar lines serving Revere – (lines 116, 117, and 118)--were changed over to trackless trolleys and finally eliminated in 1961. The Blue Line extension to Revere largely replaced that service. Expansion of Revere's major thoroughfares of Route 1, Route 1A, and Routes 60 and 16 accommodated the growth of automobile traffic through the city.

### **REVERE BEACH TRANSFORMATION**

This period also saw a series of transformations in Revere Beach as a cultural destination. Although Wonderland Amusement Park closed in 1910, a series of beachfront rides and arcades, bingo halls and food stands, bars and restaurants, hotels and pavilions, and music/dance halls and ballrooms continued to line the waterfront and extended onto piers into Broad Sound. This hectic and eclectic mix of amusements that made Revere Beach what it was in the living memory of many to this day.

In 1935, Wonderland Greyhound Park and Suffolk Downs horse racing track opened and quickly made Revere a major destination for dog and horse racing as well as dining and entertainment. These were two of the major racing facilities in the country; they each have a very distinguished history in their respective sports; they were then the only legal gambling sites in New England. Wonderland and its clubhouse was a popular



evening social and dining destination in the Boston region. Suffolk Downs was an entertainment site that hosted the Beatles for their second and last appearance in Boston. Together the two tracks made important contributions to the local economy as local employers and revenue generators.

During the 1970s, Suffolk Downs and the Wonderland Greyhound Park remained important destinations, as aging facilities and deferred maintenance gradually reduced the attractiveness of Revere Beach overall. The blizzard of 1978 destroyed or badly damaged the beach and adjacent structures. Recovery after the storm ushered in a new wave of investment in Revere Beach itself. Historic structures along the beach were restored, new parkland was created, and the beach was widened by 200 feet as part of this development.

With the closing of Suffolk Downs and Wonderland Greyhound Park along with a period of economic growth throughout the region, new development opportunities are shaping another period of transformation at Revere Beach. A vision of the development along the beach as a creative district is helping to revive the significance of the beach and its adjacent properties as a site of arts, culture, and entertainment.

## **NEW IMMIGRATION, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, AND CULTURAL REVIVAL**

Since 1980, the city of Revere has seen an influx of new immigrants. In 1980, foreign-born residents made up only nine percent of the city's population.<sup>8</sup> By 2010, about thirty percent of Revere's residents were foreign-born<sup>9</sup>, making the Revere of today similar to Revere in 1915, when foreign-born residents (almost entirely from Europe and North America) made up 32% of the city's population.<sup>10</sup> As of the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, foreign-born residents make up 37% of Revere's population and have emigrated from every region of the globe. Nearly 60% of Revere's foreign-born population emigrated from Latin America, with the rest mostly coming from Africa, Europe, and Asia. This influx of new residents has increased the racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of the city. According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey data, 50.3% of Revere residents are not native English speakers. Among non-English speakers, twenty-three percent face linguistic isolation (they lack the ability to speak English well or at all). These communities are establishing new organizations and activities, sharing and passing on their cultural traditions and artistic expressions, and building active communities.

At the same time, efforts to preserve and enhance the historic built environment of the city are drawing on art and creativity to bring new investment and energy to the city. Plans for a new Creative District along Revere Beach Boulevard are in process, and Revere Beach, one of the city's most prominent historic resources, is programmed with several signature arts and cultural events, like the International Sand Sculpting Festival, that have turned it into a regional destination. This master plan represents an opportunity to knit together the cultural heritage of Revere as a city of immigrants with the new creative energy growing in the city and the rich cultural heritage and traditions of its growing, diverse population.

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8 IPUMS NHGIS, 1980, University of Minnesota, [www.nhgis.org](http://www.nhgis.org).

9 "Massachusetts Immigrants by the Numbers, Second Edition: Demographic Characteristics and Economic Footprint," The Immigrant Learning Center, 2010.

10 1915 Decennial Census of the Commonwealth. "Nativity, color or race, illiteracy, political condition, ages, and conjugal condition." Massachusetts. Bureau of Statistics.



## Overview of Historic and Cultural Resources in Revere

Over the last twenty-five years, Revere has engaged in efforts to celebrate and preserve its history and cultural heritage. In 1994, residents formed the Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation and began to document historic structures, assemble and share historic artifacts, and build community awareness of and investment in Revere's history. That organization, which occupies a building owned by the City of Revere and made available at no cost, has succeeded in securing state or federal designation for sixty-five historically significant resources, compared with only four receiving designation before 1996. Given the importance of Revere Beach as an historic site, the organization is a member of the Revere Beach Partnership, established in 2001. Revere Beach has also been an important site for growing efforts to revive arts and culture throughout the city. A Revere Beach Arts Festival is held annually, and the International Sand Sculpting Festival is a signature event that draws artists and visitors from around the world to Revere Beach. The southern section of Revere Beach Boulevard is also the location of an envisioned Creative District plan developed in partnership with Utile, a Boston-based architecture and urban design firm. As the City of Revere has increased its investment in arts, heritage, and history, the new immigrant communities settling in Revere have established new cultural events and have begun to advocate for better access to cultural spaces and resources to support their needs.

### HISTORIC RESOURCES

Revere has two entities focused on historic preservation in the city: the Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation and the Revere Historical Commission. These organizations rely on the knowledge and expertise of Revere residents as well as their volunteer energy to document and preserve Revere's History. In addition, Revere has documented one hundred and twenty-eight historic resources, including fifty-two resources that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places as independent listings, National Historic Landmarks. Revere has also documented resources within National Register Historic Districts, of which there are three: Revere Beach Reservation National Historic District, Revere Beach Boulevard National Historic District, and Winthrop Parkway National Historic District. Revere Beach received its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 2004.

#### Historical Society

The Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation is an independent 501c3 organization founded in 1994 by Revere residents as "a non-profit, all-volunteer organization formed to foster and promote community-wide interest in the culture and history of the city of Revere. The Society seeks to educate the community, foster an awareness of the city's history, and instill pride in its citizens about their heritage. It does this through projects that document, preserve, and interpret the city's history," according to the organization's mission statement. The Society is a private organization whose members work closely with the Revere Historical Commission and other organizations active within the city. In addition to programs, materials, and artifacts for which the Society is responsible at its Beach Street headquarters, the Society has launched an expanding effort to reach out to the community. It conducts historical trolley tours and initiated the now ongoing streetlight-banner program "A Stroll through Time," which features archival photographs of Revere waterfront sites and facilities shown sequentially in their original locations.

#### Historical Commission

In addition, the City of Revere appoints members to its municipal Historical Commission. According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, local historical commissions are

"the official agents of municipal government responsible for community-wide historic preservation planning. Local historical commissions work in cooperation with other





municipal agencies, such as the select board, city council, building inspector, planning board, zoning board of appeals and conservation commission, to ensure that the goals of historic preservation are considered in the planning and future development of the community. Local historical commissions are only advisory unless a local ordinance or ordinance, such as a demolition delay ordinance, has given them regulatory jurisdiction.”<sup>11</sup>

Revere has no ordinances that assign regulatory jurisdiction to the Revere Historical Commission. In fact, the City has neither a demolition delay ordinance nor a Local Historic District Ordinance that would support historic preservation efforts through local regulatory controls.

## **NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES LISTINGS**

Applying for National Register of Historic Places designation is the most common approach for having the historic significance of a property, structure, or object recognized. Listing on the National Register is not accompanied by any regulations or restrictions on use or redevelopment. The benefits of being listed in the National Register are formal recognition of a property’s historic significance to the community, state, and/or nation; eligibility for some federal tax-incentives for rehabilitation for owners of income-producing properties; limited protection for the property from federal or state actions; and eligibility for matching state grants for restoration of properties owned by private nonprofit organizations and municipalities, when such grants are available. Revere’s fifty-two resources listed on the National Register are summarized in Table HC-1 in the Appendix, along with additional information on designation criteria.

### **Resources Designated as Historically Significant**

Revere is home to fourteen National Historic Landmarks within the Revere Beach National Register Historic District as well as two additional National Register Historic Districts: the Revere Beach Boulevard and the Winthrop Parkway. In addition, Rumney Marsh Burial Ground and eighteen objects and structures within it, as well as six buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Properties. Two buildings also feature preservation restrictions. Additional information on some of the most prominent listings is provided below.

#### **Revere Beach**

By far, the most scenic natural resource in Revere is the 3.1-mile, crescent-shaped Revere Beach Reservation, a National Historic Landmark designated in 2004 with support from Congressman Ed Markey. Opened as the first public beach in the country in 1896, the beach has brought together scenic beauty, recreation, and arts and culture throughout its history. Access by road and rail made Revere Beach a popular destination for residents in the greater Boston area. Revere Beach Parkway was home to many ballrooms and dance venues featuring live bands as well as multiple amusement parks.<sup>12</sup> The historic Revere Beach Bandstand and pavilions were restored in the 1980s and help retain the historic character and cultural infrastructure of the original design. Today, the beach hosts Revere’s International Sand Sculpting Festival and the Revere Beach Art Festival.

#### **Rumney Marsh Burial Ground**

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004, Rumney Marsh Burial Ground is an early colonial burying ground that remained in active use through 1930. It features an impressive number of 18th-century slate grave markers and is the final resting place of veterans of colonial wars, the

11 Massachusetts Historical Commission (2010). “Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances,” p.5.

12 “History,” Revere Society for Cultural & Historic Preservation (1996), City of Revere Mayor’s Office, [www.revere.org/mayors-office/history](http://www.revere.org/mayors-office/history)



Revolutionary War, and the Civil War, as well as of sixteen slaves or former slaves. The Rumney Marsh Burial Ground Renovation Committee has coordinated fundraising for the cemetery's preservation, as well as public events to commemorate the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>13</sup>

#### Revere History Museum (Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation)

The Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation (RSCHP) is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit organization that was founded in 1994. The Society renovated the 100-year-old former Immaculate Conception rectory to house a cultural and historic center, known locally as the Revere History Museum. This architecturally significant building was saved from the wrecking ball and has been restored to the Colonial Revival period. This elegant building has also been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. There is no admission for members, and a \$3 donation is suggested for non-members.

Members of the organization identify, collect, catalog, and display artifacts, photographs, and local historical items for viewing, educational research projects, and resource material. Its public offerings include guided tours of the museum, educational presentations, and a gift shop with memorabilia and artwork. RSCHP conducts fundraising events and activities to support the organization.

A needs assessment details \$3 million of restoration work needed for the History Museum. This assessment identifies updates to the electrical and plumbing, fire safety, security, and moisture protection systems, as well as work on the exterior downspouts, gutters, areas of siding, and new paint as the most pressing restoration work needed.

#### Inventoried Historic Resources

The first step in identifying properties eligible for listing on the National Register is an inventory of historic resources with local, state, or national historic significance. In addition to the fifty-two resources listed on the National Register, seventy-six resources have been inventoried and recorded on the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, which aggregates all historic inventories submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Documented resources in Revere honor civic institutions, veterans, the Italian community, the Jewish community, industry, commerce



Figure 3: Rumney Marsh Burial Ground.



Figure 4: Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation.

13 "About Rumney Marsh Burying Ground," Rumney Marsh Burying Ground Renovation Committee, <http://rmbgrc.org/about/about-rumney-marsh-burying-ground/>



and industrial workers, churches, and immigrants of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of the historic resources that have been inventoried without historic designation, a larger proportion is from the period between 1915 and 1960 when Revere was transitioning from a streetcar suburb to an automobile-oriented urban environment. This time period encompasses the period of Revere Beach as a major music, dance, and recreation destination. Documentation of significant resources constructed after 1960 has been minimal.

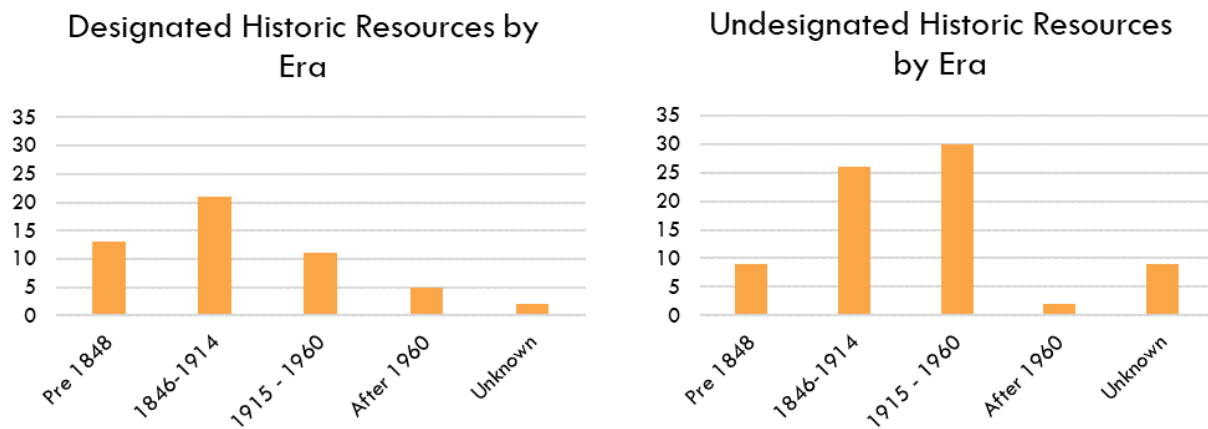


Figure 5: Distribution of Historic Resources Inventoried in MACRIS by historic era. Source: Massachusetts Historical Commission, 2019.

### Historic Monuments and Memorials

In addition to the memorials located within the Rumney Marsh Burial Ground, Revere is home to several other monuments and memorials that sit within the public realm. Most prominent among these are the statues located at the St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, which has served the Italian community in Revere since the 1920s, and the war memorial statues located at the American Legion Building on Broadway.

#### St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Memorial Statues

Two statues sit outside of the Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic Church: a statue of St. Anthony of Padua himself and one of Christopher Columbus that was originally located in front of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston. Cardinal O'Connell removed the statute from the Cathedral in Boston and presented it as a gift to the Italian community of Revere in 1925.<sup>14</sup> The statue continues to mark the starting point of Revere's annual Columbus Day Parade, a celebration of Italian heritage in Revere.

#### American Legion Building, Post 61, War Memorial Statues

Two additional statues preside over the grounds outside the City Offices in the American Legion Post 61 building, a historic building located at 249 Broadway in downtown Revere. These statues, dedicated in the 1930s to honor veterans of the Civil War and the Spanish War, honor Revere's military contributions. The grounds in front of the American Legion Building are an important site of local events and culture. The Revere Farmer's Market and Summer Music Series turn the small park into a gathering space and cultural activity hub. The memorial statues, manicured grass, and attractive landscaping contribute to its value as a scenic resource.

14 Capodilupo, Justin, MACRIS Inventory Form REV.955. Columbus, Christopher Statue.



### Archaeological Sites

Documents from the colonial period indicate that Rumney Marsh was a location where Native American tribal communities maintained settlements and where Native Americans interacted with early colonists. There are likely multiple sites with potential archaeological significance that would shed light on Native American history as well as colonial history. In his application materials for designating Revere Beach Reservation as a National Historic Landmark, historian Keith D. Morgan notes “Two prehistoric sites have been recorded in the general area (within one mile) of Revere Beach, both of which are either located on the proposed district property or may extend into it.”<sup>15</sup> Records suggest that Native American artifacts may have been excavated from both of these locations during the nineteenth century, and additional sites of archaeological significance to the Pre-Colonial period are likely. The presence of land ownership records from the colonial period indicates that archaeologically significant sites relating to the Contact Period and Colonial history are also likely.

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15 Morgan, Kevin D. (2000). “Revere Beach Reservation,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Page 8.



## Historic Preservation Planning In Revere

Historic preservation planning is a strategy for documenting the history of a community as a tool for prioritizing preservation efforts. It establishes a baseline of historic preservation efforts, allows a community to develop a set of shared preservation priorities, identifies gaps in historic inventories, and informs the work of municipal preservation entities such as Historical Commissions and Local Historic District Commissions. A strong plan links the work of municipal historic preservation to the goals and priorities of the Massachusetts Historic Commission. Revere does not currently have a Municipal Preservation Plan.

### REGULATORY TOOLS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Municipalities can also adopt regulatory tools to support historic preservation. These tools include the use of preservation restrictions on use or structural alterations of properties that are attached to deeds, demolition delay ordinances, and local historic district commissions. They can also include land use and zoning regulations that incentivize the preservation of historic densities, set-backs, and historic design elements through form-based codes.

Revere has not adopted regulatory historic preservation tools through its ordinances. Two historic resources in Revere are protected by preservation restrictions: the building that houses the Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation, and the former Slade Spice Mill. The remainder of Revere's historic resources listed on the National Register can be demolished or redeveloped without delay or restriction, in addition to all of the city's inventoried properties that are not listed on the National Register.



## Cultural Resources

Revere’s cultural resources include its important historic sites as well as a variety of other kinds of creative activities and enterprises, as well as public art. Monuments, memorials, and historic sites and markers listed historic resources are included among Revere’s cultural resources. In addition, Revere is currently home to at least six cultural organizations, eight religious institutions, six major arts and cultural events, and seven schools for dance, music, and performing arts. The Revere Public Library is also an important cultural anchor. The Wonderland Ballroom entertainment complex maintains the historic roots of Revere Beach as a destination for music and entertainment, although the majority current performances are in the modern/pop/Latin genres, rather than classic or historic genres.

Showcase Cinemas, located on Squire Road, also represents an important cultural resource in Revere, providing an opportunity for recreation and leisure. Although the majority of the offerings are national screenings, Showcase also hosts events and offers independent movie screenings.

Fleetwood Studios, as mentioned in the Economic Development chapter, also played an important role in the production of cultural resources in Revere, serving as a recording studio for a range of musicians until its closure several years ago.

## Revere Arts and Culture Assets

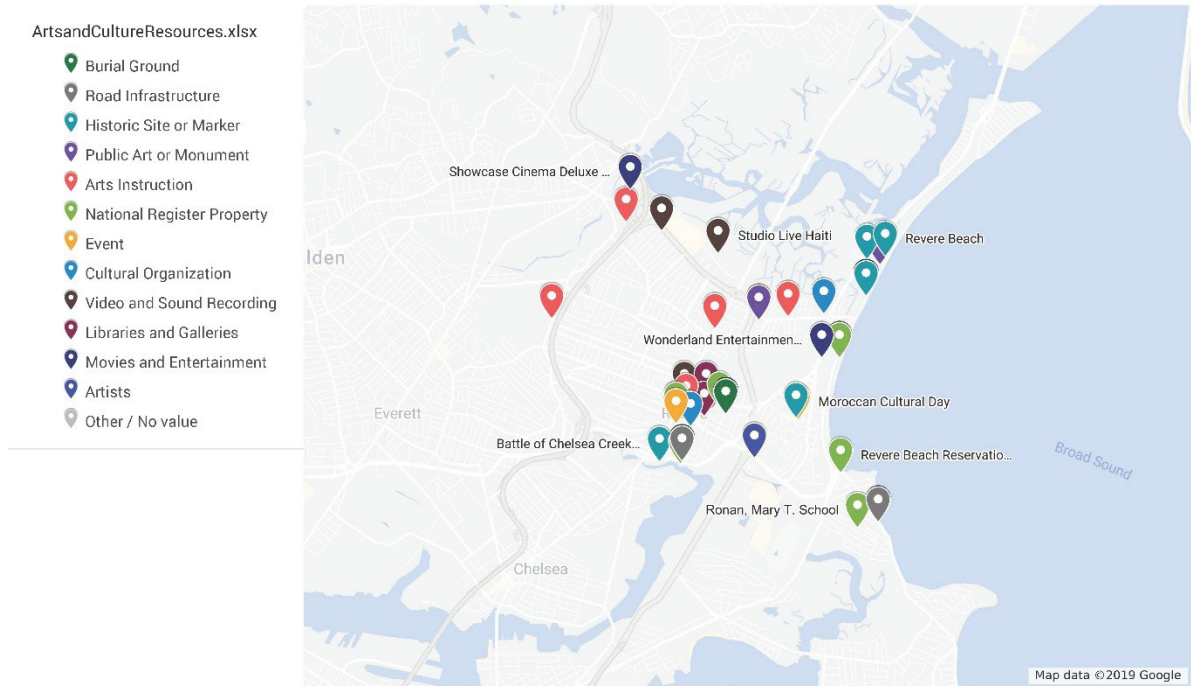


Figure 6: Arts and culture assets in Revere compiled from MACRIS data, MAPC research, and community input, 2019.



### LIBRARIES AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Revere has a variety of organizations that work to support arts and culture in the city. The Revere Cultural Council has funded a variety of artistic and cultural activities in the city. The Revere Beach Partnership



has established signature arts and culture events on Revere Beach, including the Annual Arts Festival and International Sand Sculpting Festival. The Beachmont Improvement Committee is an important partner in the Beachmont neighborhood. In addition, cultural organizations such as the Turkish Cultural Center, the Jossour Moroccan Association, and Moroccan American Connections in Revere (MACIR) have formed to support growing immigrant populations in the city.

Religious institutions also play a key role in celebrating cultural identities and creating and celebrating various forms of cultural expression. Other community organizations have also integrated arts and culture into their strategies to improve the health and well-being of Revere residents. Revere on the Move's work to bring art to Revere's open space network and The Neighborhood Developers' work with the communities of the Shirley Avenue neighborhood are examples of how organizations are integrating arts and culture into community building.

### REVERE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

It is important to note that the Revere Public Schools play a key role in shaping the culture of Revere and in providing a range of activities and programs that support the rich cultural diversity in Revere. Public schools, and the Revere High School, in particular, host several community events, convenings, and other public gatherings, and provide a space where residents throughout Revere can connect and engage. In addition, citywide schools such as the High School serve as a strong connection point for Revere youth from different neighborhoods, whose interactions might have been more limited given that education at earlier levels is provided through neighborhood schools. The schools also provide critical cultural, historic, and arts education throughout the various grade levels.

The construction of a new High School provides an opportunity to consider ways to further reinforce the role of the High School in creating/shaping the culture of Revere as well as its role in providing cultural and arts education to students and members of the Revere community.

### REVERE CULTURAL COUNCIL

The Revere Cultural Council (RCC) is Revere's Local Cultural Council (LCC), a municipal entity that distributes arts and cultural funding provided by the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) to local artists and organizations according to state guidelines and local criteria. State guidelines require that LCC funds only be used to support programs in the arts, humanities, and sciences in Massachusetts. This definition includes the study, pursuit, performance, exhibition, and appreciation of cultural activities in the broadest sense. They must provide a public benefit by contributing to the cultural vitality of the community as a whole rather than benefiting an individual, and they must be non-discriminatory. The Revere Cultural Council provides funding through reimbursement rather than Direct Grants in which approved applicants receive funding upfront. Funding provided as a reimbursement means that applicants must expend their own money, and if approved for a grant, they submit paperwork for reimbursement.<sup>16</sup>

In FY2020, the RCC was allocated \$30,300 by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. In FY2019, the RCC disbursed \$28,228 for local arts and cultural programming, with 92% of the funds allocated to the arts and 8% allocated to humanities programs. The funds were awarded to the City of Revere and the Parks and Recreation Department (42.8%), six schools (42.1% combined), three organizations (8.4%), and three individuals (6.6%). Funding allocated to the City of Revere supported the Sunday Concert Series in Revere parks and the Little Libraries program. Funding allocated to schools supported arts and culture enrichment

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16 Massachusetts Cultural Council. (2019) "About the LCC Program," and "Application Guidelines."



programs such as African Arts in Education programs, a North Shore Music Theater field trip, and a drama program, among others.

### REVERE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Revere Public Library is housed in a building on Beach Street dedicated in 1903 and constructed with funds provided by Andrew Carnegie. It is open to the public Monday through Saturday and also offers access to online resources to the public through its website. The mission of the library is “to foster the intellectual and cultural life of the community of Revere by providing quality literature, media, programming, and access to technology for residents of all ages.”



Figure 7: Revere Public Library

### REVERE BEACH PARTNERSHIP

Revere Beach Partnership is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was established in 2001. The mission of the organization is to carry forth the heritage of Revere Beach as a nearby retreat for New England families; preserve the beach's historic and natural assets; strengthen the beach as an asset to Revere by developing programs and partnerships, and plan and oversee the continued improvement of Revere Beach. The organization's flagship event is the Revere Beach International Sand Sculpting Festival, now in its 10th year. Funds raised during the event help fund other efforts and family events throughout the remainder of the year, including establishing a capital plan to fund major improvement projects that aim to strengthen the fabric of the Revere Beach community.

### LATINX REPRESENTATION

It is important to note that unlike other surrounding municipalities with similarly large and growing Latinx populations, such as Chelsea and Everett, there is no formally established Latinx organization. There are several Spanish-speaking church congregations in Revere that play a key role in providing a space for leadership development, cultural expression, and support for members of the Latinx community in Revere. These congregations include the Tabernacle Assembly of God and Betel Evangelical Church. In addition, there is a program called Las Parceritas, with videos on YouTube as well as a blog, dedicated to promoting cultural exchange and women's empowerment.

Currently, however, over 50 leaders within the Latinx community are working to establish a “Concilio Latino” (Latino Council) that will provide the platform to organize the Latinx community in Revere. The need for more organized support and protection for the Latinx community was a theme in the Spanish-speaking focus group to develop additional political influence and representation.

### MOROCCAN AMERICAN CONNECTIONS IN REVERE

Moroccan American Connections in Revere (MACIR) is a grass-roots organization that was established to inspire and empower Moroccan Americans in the city of Revere through education, cultural events, leadership, and civic engagement initiatives. MACIR organizes the annual Moroccan Cultural Day event on Shirley Avenue with the city of Revere. The event features Moroccan food, live music, henna tattoo art, and local Moroccan vendors, and showcases the Moroccan cultural diaspora in Revere.





### **TURKISH CULTURAL CENTER MASSACHUSETTS**

The Turkish Cultural Center of Massachusetts has a location in Revere. The Turkish Cultural Center is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization. According to its website, it “aims to respond to social and cultural needs of Turkish-Americans and to promote cross-cultural awareness that is based on mutual respect and understanding of the Turkish Culture within Massachusetts by bringing everyone together in an open dialogue.”

### **WOMEN ENCOURAGING EMPOWERMENT**

Women Encouraging Empowerment (WEE) was created to “educate, advocate, protect and advance the rights of immigrants, refugees and low-income women and their families through organizing leadership development and service delivery.”<sup>17</sup> The organization provides a range of services for immigrants and refugees, such as English classes and Citizenship classes.



## Cultural Districts

Clusters of arts and culture activity, restaurants, creative retail, and events that are located within a walkable area function as naturally occurring cultural districts. In addition, the Massachusetts Cultural Council has a Cultural Districts program through which districts can go through a process to achieve state designation as cultural districts. This designation usually is accompanied by small matching grants to support coordination of activities and basic district branding and signage. Revere does not have any state-designated cultural districts. However, it has explored the potential to establish a new Creative District along Revere Beach to spur investment and expand the arts and cultural resources around the beach, in line with its historic importance as a pop-culture and entertainment destination. In addition, Revere's Shirley Avenue Commercial District is home to active cultural organizations and efforts to infuse arts and culture into the public realm through hosting community-wide cultural events, installing little free libraries, and other activities.

The list below represents a selection of business districts that could be considered cultural districts, but it certainly is not a comprehensive list, given that other business districts, such as Beachmont, also serve as cultural hubs.

### ▶ DOWNTOWN CIVIC DISTRICT

The spine of Broadway from the Revere Fire Station at Central Avenue to Beach Street is the historic civic center of the city. It features many cuisines from Revere's diverse cultural communities. Public art in the form of historic monuments and engravings are complemented by new art on utility boxes that brighten the streetscape. Street trees offer shade, and the plaza and landscape around the American Legion building serve as community gathering spaces for events like the Farmer's Market and Annual Fall Festival.

### ▶ REVERE BEACH CREATIVE DISTRICT

Revere Beach Boulevard north of Eliot Circle is the location of an envisioned Revere Beach Creative District. The Creative District articulates a long-term development vision for the parcels of land between



Figure 8: Revere Beach Creative District Rendering. Source: Utile Design.



Revere Beach Boulevard and Ocean Avenue. The vision for the Revere Beach Creative District anticipates a revitalized corridor of housing, restaurants, art galleries, and cultural programming that activates the beach and creates a new destination accessible from the Revere Beach MBTA Blue Line stop.<sup>18</sup> The principles articulated in the District vision are seeking to inform ongoing development along the waterfront. Efforts to establish the district are working to enhance the utilization of available public properties for public art. Public art not only has benefits as a cultural product but also enhances economic development and a sense of place.

## SHIRLEY AVENUE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The Shirley Avenue Commercial District, a naturally-occurring cultural district, extends west from the Revere Beach MBTA station and represents an active, ethnically diverse commercial corridor close to the planned Revere Beach Creative District. Cultural events hosted in the district include the Shirley Avenue Cultural Fest, the Moroccan Cultural Day celebration, and the Cambodian New Year celebration. The neighborhood is home to an important if unassuming cultural hub for the region's Cambodian and Buddhist population. Wat Ratanarangsey on Thornton Street has long served local residents and members of the Cambodian diaspora in the region. A longstanding Jewish Community Center (JCC) houses CAPIC programs just off Shirley Avenue along Nahant Ave.



Figure 9: 5th Annual Shirley Avenue Cultural Fest;  
Source: Ira Novoselsky, Twitter.

18 Utile Design (2015), Revere Beach Creative District Master Plan Summary, [www.utiledesign.com/work/revere-beach-creative-district/](http://www.utiledesign.com/work/revere-beach-creative-district/)



## Public Art and Public Space Activation

### REVERE PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

Art enhances Revere's identity as a community that values diverse creative expression. It builds a sense of civic pride and enriches the quality of life. Public art fulfills these purposes in myriad ways, by improving residents' experience of public spaces through harmonious design, by preserving and showcasing vistas, by introducing surprising elements into otherwise ordinary spaces, and by engaging residents with insightful interpretations of the community's cultural aspirations and history. Public art has the potential to humanize Revere's urban environment by inspiring conversations and bonding among residents. The RPAC recognizes the significance of integrating public art into the daily lives of Revere residents. RPAC supports a strong public art program and encourages engagement of and collaboration among individuals, private groups, and public organizations for all public art installations, both temporary and permanent.

### LITTLE LIBRARY PROGRAM

The Little Library program has been launched citywide through Cultural Council funds and serves to build pride-of-place among Revere residents, to activate public spaces, and to beautify the public realm. Throughout 2019, residents were recruited to paint a library, and residents were then asked to become stewards to monitor the condition and inventory of the libraries.

### NORTHERN STRAND COMMUNITY TRAIL

Revere's one-mile segment of the Northern Strand Community Trail opened in 2015 and offers scenic views of Rumney Marsh. Revere has been designated as the lead administrative municipality for a \$13 million EOEEA contract to refurbish and improve the entire North Strand Trail for the series of communities through which it passes. The trail offers opportunities to connect with local food production in Everett and Malden, both of which have established community gardens along their trail segments. The community garden located along Everett's section of the Trail also features a mural painted by local high school students. Working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the City of Everett also implemented a project that included a community garden within a sculptural earthwork to celebrate the local food cultures of Everett's residents. Over time, the trail can become a place of cultural expression and exchange across its linked communities.

### SARGENT STREET MURAL PROJECT

The Revere Cultural Council and Revere on the Move sponsored an artist to develop a historical paneled mural depicting scenes and people from West Revere on a series of twelve 4x8 panels that were installed



Figure 10: Revere utility box on Broadway painted by Bruce Orr, 2018.



along the Sargent Street underpass.<sup>19</sup> The mural was unveiled in October 2018. The mural was designed through a community process coordinated through the West Revere Neighborhood Group and the Revere Mural Group. Community members shared photographs and memorabilia that the Saugus-based mural artist, Debbie Barrett-Cutulle, combined with research conducted at the Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation as inspiration for the final work.<sup>20</sup> This mural is one of several anticipated underpass murals to be located on underpasses throughout the city. The City is also pursuing funds for underpass lighting for beautification and public safety/pedestrian enhancements.

### **SHIRLEY AVENUE GATEWAY MURAL**

A noteworthy community mural is located in the Shirley Avenue neighborhood just by the Revere Beach MBTA plaza on private property. Commissioned as part of a community-engaged mural project that employed a local artist, the project was funded through the Revere Cultural Council and private funds as part of the Shirley Ave Gateway Initiative. More murals are likely to come in Shirley Avenue; however, a formal district program has not yet been established due to staffing constraints.

### **THE SWITCHBOX ART PROJECT**

The City of Revere and Revere on the Move launched Project Switchbox in 2018 to bring more art to the streets of downtown Revere. The goal of Revere's Switchbox Art Project is to enhance and beautify Revere by promoting Revere's rich cultural diversity and immense history by looking at the past, present, and future. The City received funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to cover the cost of materials and initiated a public process to match artists with nineteen switch boxes. In the artist application, the City encourages artists to emphasize social contributions and community outreach through their work.

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19 Vocino, Tara. (2018) "Sargent Street underpass mural mirrors West Revere, resident." Advocate News Online. Accessed Sept. 12, 2019 at <https://advocateneews.net/sargent-street-underpass-mural-mirrors-west-revere-resident/>

20 Turcotte, Bridget. (2018) "Historical Underpass Mural Unveiled in Revere," The Daily Item. Accessed online Sept. 12, 2019 at <https://www.itemlive.com/2018/10/04/historical-underpass-mural-unveiled-in-revere/>



## Creative Economy

The Creative Economy is defined as industry groups and occupations with a focus on making and sharing cultural goods, services, and ideas. The New England Foundation for the Arts separates the Creative Economy into Core and Peripheral Sectors. Core Sectors have a categorical focus on cultural goods, services, and intellectual property at a national level. In Revere, core industries include Visual Arts, Music, and other Performing Arts, including photography studios, schools of dance, and other artists; Architecture and Design, primarily graphic and interior design; Media; Printing; Art-related Retail; Motion picture and teleproduction, including Showcase Cinemas and a few local production and video processing firms; Marketing; Publishing; Culture and Preservation; and Wholesale art stores. Peripheral Sectors support the Core Sectors and were not included in this analysis.

Despite its historic importance as a destination for pop-culture music, dance, and entertainment, Creative economy establishments are less prominent in Revere's economy than in the Inner Core Subregion or among other communities in its MAPC community subtype (communities similar to Revere) as shown in Figure 10 below. In fact, the share of creative economy establishments in Revere, at 3.9%, is about half that of similar communities, which range from 7.8% to 8.1%. Across the MAPC region, Revere is among the communities with the lowest share of creative establishments in their local economies, illustrated in Figure 11 below.

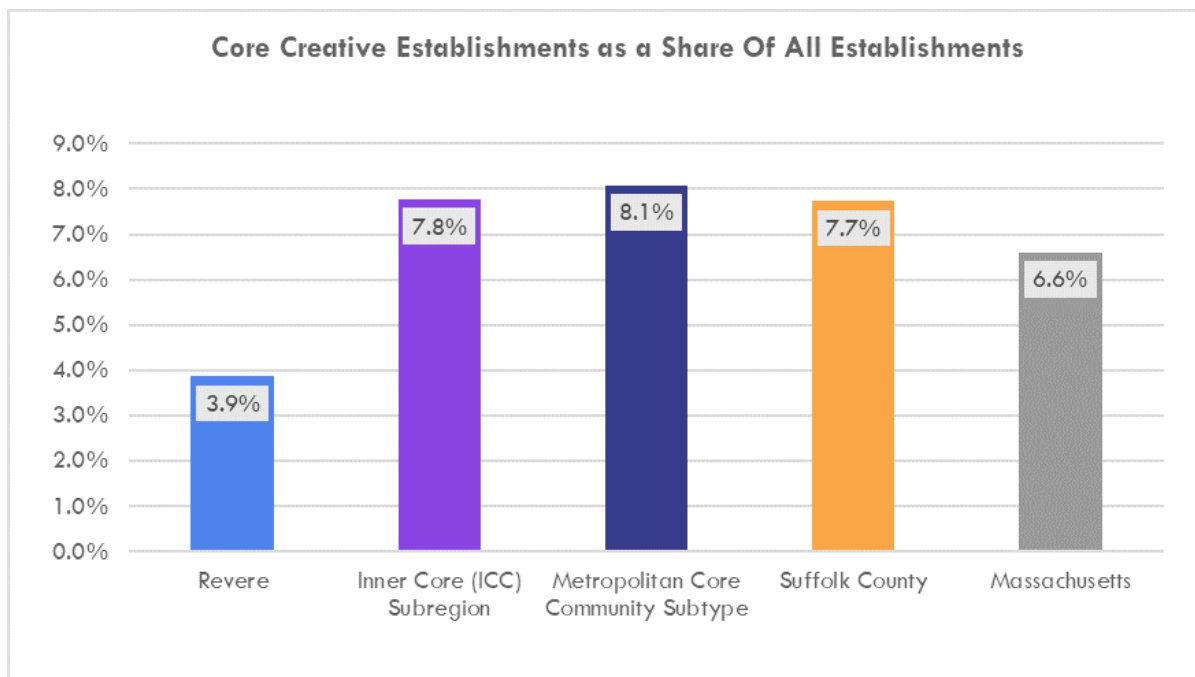


Figure 11: Core Creative Establishments in Revere compared with other reference geographies, 2016. Source: InfoUSA.

Creative activity clusters in Revere are shown in Figure 12. The three largest clusters are located in the Shirley Avenue neighborhood, downtown Revere between City Hall and the Revere Fire Department, stretching east to Beach Street, and around Showcase Cinemas near Copeland Circle. Smaller clusters are located along Squire Road near Brown Circle, along Revere Street, and in Beachmont. The Shirley Avenue neighborhood, the Beachmont neighborhood, and downtown are also home to cultural events and important historic resources and cultural facilities. Strengthening these centers of activity and the connections between them can help nurture the resurgence of Revere's creative economy.

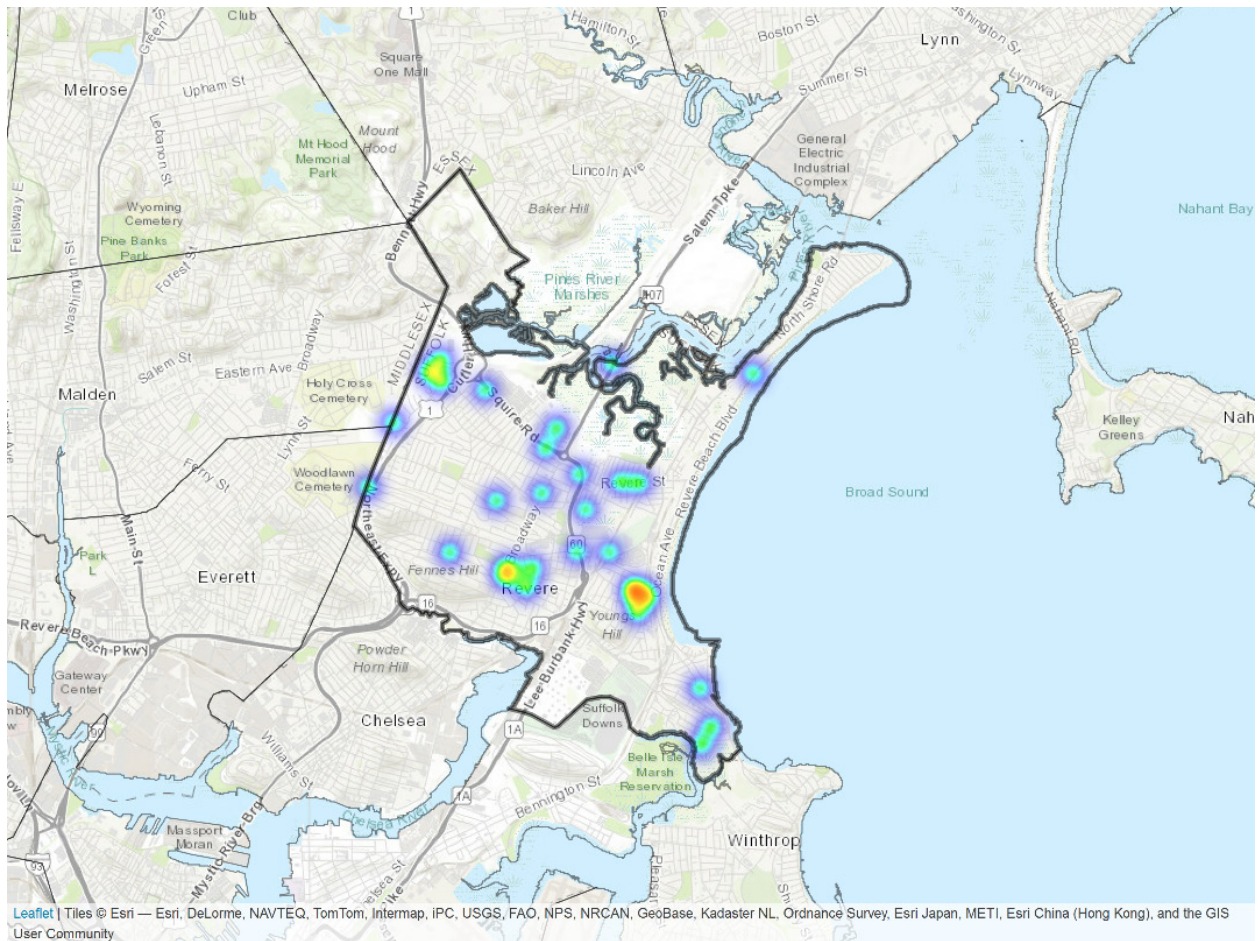


Figure 12: Heat map of 2016 creative economy activity in Revere. Source: InfoUSA

## CREATIVE ECONOMY STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The strengths of Revere's creative economy today mirror those of its past. Unlike in other communities where architecture and design are the core creative industry with the largest share of creative establishments (24% across the MAPC region), in Revere, Visual Arts, Music, and other Performing Arts is the dominant industry, making up 21% of all creative establishments. Within that industry, the dominant establishment type is Fine Arts Schools, made up of the schools of music and dance, identified among Revere's arts and culture assets. It is important to note that while the category of Fine Arts Schools includes performing arts schools, there currently and no such schools in Revere. Nurturing this local creative activity, supporting Revere's cultural communities, and establishing a creative district represent an opportunity for the city.



## Challenges

Challenges related to supporting Revere's historic and cultural resources highlight a disconnect between the organizational infrastructure supporting historic preservation, the organizational infrastructure promoting the arts, and the organizations supporting the vitality of Revere's cultural communities.

Such a disconnect is not specific to Revere, but it is notable because of the opportunity it presents to address other challenges including racism, as well as the lack of municipal policies supporting historic and cultural resources, the lack of cultural facilities to meet the needs of current residents and issues of pedestrian safety. Addressing these challenges will also provide economic benefits, given the economic value of developing a robust creative, historic, and cultural ecosystem.

### ▶ **COORDINATION AMONG HISTORIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Revere is heavily dependent on a core of volunteer committees and non-profit organizations to lead historic preservation and arts and culture initiatives. In addition, the work of MACIR has helped empower the Moroccan-American community in Revere while other organizations are working to increase civic engagement among Revere's other immigrant and cultural communities. The energy of these individuals and organizations has led to a variety of public art projects, the dynamic impacts of the Revere Beach Partnership, and the successful preservation and restoration of the Immaculate Conception Rectory building that houses the Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation. This reliance on volunteer-run organizations has also led to an uneven distribution of capacity across Revere's neighborhoods as there is no systematic and comprehensive network of neighborhood-based groups in Revere. Neighborhoods lacking in this civic infrastructure have limited capacity to initiate arts and culture programming or historic preservation projects. *Next Stop Revere* has helped to bring these organizations and their constituents together, but additional work will be needed to bridge divides of language, culture, and access to power. Historically, the lack of access to spaces of convening, particularly spaces that serve diverse communities and needs, has posed a barrier to coordination in Revere.

### ▶ **COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (DCR)**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been an important ally in the preservation and conservation of Revere's natural resources and heritage sites. The Department of Conservation and Recreation has jurisdiction over 476.22 acres of land in Revere. DCR owns and manages Revere Beach Reservation, the Cronin Rink, a canoe launch, and other lands along Revere Beach Parkway and a large portion of Rumney Marsh and Belle Isle Marsh. All of the state land is considered protected in perpetuity. This inter-jurisdictional context complicates Revere's ability to execute strategies for the promotion and protection of many of its key resources.

### ▶ **RACISM AND LANGUAGE ISOLATION**

As identified in the Public Health element of the master plan, racism is a significant challenge for social and cultural cohesion in Revere. At the *Next Stop Revere* Kick-Off meeting, residents frequently identified racism or racismo (in Spanish), as a concern. This concern has been echoed in the North Suffolk Integrated Community Health Needs Assessment (iCHNA) survey, in which fifteen percent of respondents indicated





that they had been treated badly or unfairly in the last year due to their race or ethnicity. In that same survey, twenty-nine percent of Latinx-identifying respondents indicated that they had been subject to unfair treatment due to their race. Middle-eastern immigrants also report experiencing unfair treatment due to their physical appearance and wearing hijab. One respondent at the January *Next Stop Revere* Kick-Off event wrote, “The city of Revere should be a community for everyone regardless of his or her culture and language background.”

Language isolation is also an issue in Revere. Immigrants in Revere report feeling unwelcome in public spaces and places. Fatou Drammeh, a member of the Master Plan Steering Committee, notes, “language is the biggest barrier of newcomers attending events.” The need for greater language access to public events and resources is a significant challenge in Revere. However, it is also important to note that many young people and adults are bi-lingual or multi-lingual. This language capacity is a significant asset from an educational and workforce development perspective, as well as from the viewpoint of social and cultural mobility and appreciation.

## CULTURAL FACILITIES

Residents participating in the *Next Stop Revere* Kick-Off event frequently mentioned the need for a community center to support gatherings, recreational opportunities, and engaging activities for youth and seniors. Conversations with *Next Stop Revere* Steering Committee members also revealed a lack of access to cultural facilities for religious observances, cultural practices, and community gatherings. The lack of engaging activities for adolescents and teenagers both in outdoor parks and indoor facilities was also mentioned frequently.

During this planning process, the closing of the last synagogue in Revere, Temple B’nai Israel, which opened in 1906, highlighted the impact of demographic change on historic cultural communities and their facilities. Many of these facilities have not been inventoried with the Mass Historical Commission nor recognized as historically significant. While they may provide opportunities to meet the needs of Revere’s immigrant and creative communities, they will likely need significant investment in upgrading and adaptive reuse. Meanwhile, as places of worship are evolving, and in some cases, closing, religious communities, institutions, and facilities remain active within Revere’s social, cultural, and advocacy networks, beyond their purely religious significance.

As mentioned in the Economic Development and Open Space and Recreation Chapters, public space in private developments can be a significant benefit to the city. Such space can also add to the breadth of cultural facilities in the city. For example, at Suffolk Downs, HYM is planning for public square space with an amphitheater that is intended to serve and promote the multi-cultural nature of the community with festivals and other civic and community programs and activities.

As noted above, the public school system serves a number of social and cultural purposes, not least through its Community School program; and its facilities are increasingly being made available for these purposes – e.g., the Garfield School now serves as a community center, and the new Revere High School could be designed to encourage and optimize such activities.

## MOBILITY AND SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

At the height of Revere’s significance as a cultural destination, streetcars and trolleys connected the walkable downtown district to Revere Beach and its surrounding neighborhoods. Those connections have been steadily eroded with the closure of streetcar lines and by the expansion of highway infrastructure. The



limited mobility between cultural centers in the city is a challenge to rebuilding the city's cultural vitality. The lack of strong east-west transit connections and safe pedestrian routes creates barriers to the growth of cultural resources that serve the city as a whole. Building civic infrastructure and social networks across neighborhood boundaries requires safe, multi-modal pedestrian and transit connectivity. Pedestrian access to Revere Beach, Revere's most prominent historic and cultural resource, is restricted for much of the city. Pedestrian access from neighborhoods east of Route 16 to the historic and cultural resources clustered near the spine of Broadway is limited and dangerous.

### **MUNICIPAL POLICY AND PRESERVATION PLANNING**

Municipal preservation planning can serve to ensure that historic and cultural resources are protected and well-maintained for future generations. Revere has not engaged in a municipal preservation planning process to build community support for preservation, collect neighborhood and community histories, and identify and prioritize key resources. In addition, Revere lacks municipal policies to support historic and cultural preservation activities. The state allocation to the Revere Cultural Council is the primary funding source available for the arts and historical and cultural programming in Revere.

### **PRESERVATION OVERSIGHT: DEMOLITION DELAY**

Demolition delay, while ineffective as a stand-alone policy tool, can be a useful resource when accompanied by a robust preservation planning effort that identifies and documents key historic and cultural resources. In combination with documentation of the significance and contributing features of a resource, it can provide an opportunity for community input and prevention of demolition during periods of rapid development. While there are no documented cases of the demolition of historically significant properties in Revere, the adoption of a demolition delay ordinance to encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures with significance to the cultural heritage of Revere would provide the City with some oversight over the impact of new development on preservation activities.

### **PRESERVATION FUNDING: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT**

The adoption of a preservation funding tool, such as the Community Preservation Act, would provide funding to support historic preservation activities, the preservation of open spaces, and affordable housing development, all of which can contribute to social and cultural cohesion. This funding could further enhance Revere's open space network, which hosts a variety of arts and culture programs. In addition, funding to develop and preserve affordable housing could help stabilize neighborhoods adjacent to new development projects, and funding could also be used to adapt historic facilities for new cultural and community uses.



## Opportunities

### ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION

Revere Beach is a place of historic and cultural significance that supports recreation as well as artistic and cultural programming. Based on feedback from the Kick-off event, residents love Revere Beach as an historic asset, regional destination, and unique open space. Staff from the Revere Planning Department have been leading several initiatives to preserve and promote cultural programming. Revere on the Move has integrated arts and culture into Revere's open space and recreation resources since 2018, through programming such as Summer Nights and Neighborways. The organization helped coordinate the integration of an Arts and Culture element into Revere's 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Focus groups for that plan collected ideas of how Revere's parks and open space can better support artistic and cultural activities as well as more active recreational uses. The Recreation Department has demonstrated effective engagement of local residents despite the lack of neighborhood civic infrastructure.

In addition, there are opportunities to work with DCR to increase historic and cultural programming within their parks and open spaces. For example, a senior-oriented performance space could be included at an improved Sullivan Park, and historical interpretation could be added to pavilions and walkways on DCR properties.

### CONNECTING HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Revere is rich in cultural diversity and is growing its civic infrastructure to engage new immigrant communities as well as long-time residents. Many respondents at the Kick-Off event named diversity as one of the things they love most about the city. Finding ways to honor the cultural heritage of Revere's many communities through arts education, cultural facility development, and public art is an important opportunity for Revere.

Revere's active and engaged core of volunteers dedicated to identifying and preserving Revere's historic and cultural resources has demonstrated its willingness to engage with issues of cultural equity through its work memorializing the slaves buried in the Rumney Marsh Burial Ground. The Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation has expressed an interest in building connections to Revere's new immigrant communities through cultural programming in RSCHP-managed facilities. Providing training for these volunteers in racial equity and cultural competency would strengthen the work they have already begun and would facilitate better coordination with the cultural organizations that serve Revere's new immigrant communities. Facilitating stronger connections among RSCHP and organizations and individuals working with Revere's immigrant communities help celebrate the contributions of those communities to Revere's history and build stronger networks across neighborhood and cultural identities.

Highlighting the importance of Rumney Marsh as a site of Native American settlement and colonial contact also represents an opportunity for expanding the cultural history of Revere to include its original inhabitants. Archaeological exploration and partnership with Native American organizations would enable Revere to recognize and celebrate the history of Native American settlement in Revere as a step toward promoting a culturally inclusive approach to historic preservation in Revere.

### ARTS EDUCATION

Revere's concentration of schools of music, and dance, as well as its growing array of cultural festivals, represent an opportunity to strengthen Revere's arts education system. The Revere Cultural Council is funding a variety of artistic programs in Revere's schools, suggesting demand for artistic enrichment and a



need for greater funding. Exploring partnerships with state-wide organizations like ARTS|Learning to create arts education pathways that integrate diverse cultural practices and artistic expressions is an exciting opportunity. The widespread interest in investment in Revere's schools and the role of schools as important points of access to public resources for immigrant families creates an exciting opportunity for arts and culture to support resident priorities. Establishing creative educational pathways would also support the revival of the city as a center for creative economic activity.

Public schools in Revere serve several social and cultural purposes, and public school facilities are increasingly being made available for these purposes. The Garfield School now serves as a community center, and the new Revere High School could be designed to encourage and optimize such activities.

### **HIDDEN HISTORIES**

Celebrating Revere's civic history and its importance as a hub for popular culture and entertainment has been the focus of historic and cultural preservation efforts in Revere. Other histories and community narratives remain less visible. For example, the more recent history of the Cambodian community that settled in the Shirley Avenue neighborhood in the 1980s and helped re-establish the area as a cultural hub is largely unknown outside the neighborhood itself. These hidden histories are an opportunity to expand the story of Revere's history and heritage.

### **MOBILITY AND SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY**

New development in Revere presents opportunities to strengthen Revere's historic and cultural resources. Given the impact of access and mobility in Revere, exploring opportunities to expand pedestrian and bicycle connections among Revere's downtown, Shirley Avenue, and Revere Beach districts would help restore the historic levels of mobility in the city. In addition, the expansion of Revere's open space network as a heritage landscape would help to elevate the area's importance for the ecology of the region as a whole while providing new spaces for cultural programming.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

As mentioned earlier, the entertainment, recreation, sport, gambling, and performance history of Revere could serve as a template for the continuing redevelopment of Revere. Approaching new development as part of a broader creative placemaking effort that draws on the unique history of each site could have implications for the future commercial development of major sites like Wonderland.

New development also represents opportunities to establish new cultural spaces that meet the needs of Revere's cultural communities. The new Revere High School and Suffolk Downs developments could include additional spaces to support arts and culture activities. A percent-for-art ordinance could generate revenue from new development to support arts and culture in Revere. New development also presents opportunities to include new community and cultural spaces to support music and dance activities as well as other art forms. Such spaces would support Revere's diverse cultural communities and elevate Revere as a destination for arts and culture. The development plans for Suffolk Downs include public square space intended to serve and promote the multi-cultural nature of the community with festivals and other civic and community programs and activities, and this model should be explored for other development sites as well.



## Community Input

The Revere community provided input that has informed the recommendations for historic and cultural resources in Revere through participation in the Kick-Off event, public forums in the Spring of 2019, an online survey and a focus group held in the fall.

Overall, Revere residents communicated that they value the cultural diversity of the city, Revere Beach as an important historic and recreation asset, and also expressed concerns about racism and building a sense of inclusion and belonging for newer immigrant populations.

### FEEDBACK FROM FORUMS

This section provides a summary of feedback received from members of the public. A public forum dedicated to discussing Housing, Economic Development, and Historic and Cultural Resources was held on April 10, 2019, at the Revere High School. At this forum, residents had an opportunity to review the existing conditions of historic and cultural resources in Revere and discuss nine draft goals for strengthening those resources in the Master Plan by rating each goal as high, medium, or low priority and providing comments.

Overall, participants in the focus group were supportive of the draft goals, which included goals for strengthening historic preservation alongside goals to support and strengthen arts and culture. All of the goals were rated as Medium or High priority by an overwhelming majority of respondents (84% or more). A few goals had unanimous or near-unanimous ratings of medium or high priority, including "expand pedestrian access to cultural resources," "increase affordable community gathering spaces and cultural facilities," and "document the stories of Revere's diverse cultural communities."

Participants in the forum expressed an interest in understanding Revere's history as a city of immigrant cultures, but noted challenges with learning and connecting to the city's arts and culture and historic preservation activities. Participants stated that they would like to see the schools continue to be used as a resource for sharing the history of the community with Revere's children and families and for expanding arts education: "MORE emphasis on the arts in the schools. Academics should go 'hand in hand' with artistic pursuits." Revere High School offers a number of history and arts related courses, and participants expressed an interest in continuing to support and expand such courses.

Comments from the forum emphasized the strong linkages between history, art, and culture in Revere: "Art and culture ARE the city of Revere."

Comments also emphasized building on the strengths of existing organizations while also building in stronger structures for inclusion. One commenter shared that they would like to see a "more inclusive community process for public art decisions and creations - currently not happening. Only old Revere engaged but not new Revere."

The need for affordable community and cultural gatherings spaces was also a key theme: "We need places that are large enough to hold large groups; we have such a diverse population, and most of the residents don't know (as friends) other cultural groups."



## FEEDBACK FROM THE SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS

In addition to a survey, the City held a series of focus groups to inform the Master Plan recommendations. The focus group on historic and cultural resources in Revere was held on September 18, 2019, at the Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation. Themes from the focus group echoed issues that emerged from the forums and the survey:

- Arts and culture programming can be isolated in individual neighborhoods, and lack of social connectivity and transportation networks among neighborhoods creates barriers to attracting wider audiences to events and programs.
- There is a need for municipal staffing to help coordinate and support arts and culture initiatives and activities throughout the city.
- Revere's public schools lack a dedicated art department to support the growth of arts and culture in Revere. The City has partnered with neighboring public schools with strong art programs (e.g., Medford High School for graphic design) and would like to see that talent developed in the city.
- Interest in a stronger arts education curriculum was echoed by participants in the Spanish-language focus group as well.
- Diversity is one of Revere's biggest strengths, and there are opportunities to build bridges with Revere's immigrant communities to support their incorporation into the civic life of the city and tell the story of their cultural heritage and contributions to Revere.
- There is a need for more spaces where diverse communities can come together for public forums, community gatherings, and cultural programming.
- The focus group included discussion of whether it would be appropriate to expand Revere's historic narratives to include more controversial associations, such as its connection to mafia activity. This issue was raised but not resolved.
- New development presents an opportunity for funding arts and culture programs, development of spaces, and expanding public art in the city.

### KEY THEMES

Diversity: Value of diversity and need for more cultural inclusion.

Space: Importance of having spaces to support cultural programming and community gathering.

History: Importance of linking history, arts, and culture to education and extra-curricular activities.

Legacy: Importance of building on the legacy of Revere as a center of arts, culture, and entertainment.

Partnerships: Importance of partnering with existing organizations and assets in Revere.



## Recommendations

The nine goals presented at the April 10th Forum have been condensed into six goals based on community feedback and input. These goals complement goals in the other chapters of this plan.

### Goal 1

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#### Increase cultural equity and inclusion in Revere

##### **Programming, Partnerships & Internal City Operations**

Strategy 1.1. Document and share the stories of indigenous communities in Revere.

Strategy 1.2. Document and share the stories of immigrant communities in Revere.

Strategy 1.3. Inventory historic resources with cultural significance to Revere's historic immigrant communities.

Strategy 1.4. Translate all arts, culture, and historic preservation funding opportunities into Revere's most commonly spoken languages and promote through cultural organizations and networks.

Strategy 1.5 Create a Complete Count Census Committee with representation of stakeholders from the various cultural and socioeconomic groups in Revere, to promote a complete and accurate census count

##### **Planning**

Strategy 1.6 Encourage participation among residents of all neighborhoods, ages, and backgrounds in municipal planning for arts, culture, and historic preservation

### Goal 2

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#### Improve access to historic resources and cultural facilities for all Revere residents

##### **Programming, Partnerships & Internal City Operations**

Strategy 2.1. Use Massachusetts Historic Commission inventory forms to document historic cultural facilities with adaptive reuse potential for new cultural and community use.

Strategy 2.2. Translate interpretive signage and historical narratives into the most commonly spoken languages in Revere.

Strategy 2.3. Host cultural programming that serves Revere's immigrant communities within the Revere Society for Cultural and Historical Preservation museum and public historic facilities. Explore the feasibility of documenting and celebrating significant people from Revere's history.

Strategy 2.4 Expand public art program, such as the underpass mural installations, and work with key partners to develop criteria for determining content, development, and maintenance of such public art.

**Planning**

Strategy 2.5. Facilitate coordination among historic preservation and cultural organizations to identify shared priorities.

Strategy 2.6. Identify opportunities for matching funds to enable application for Cultural Facilities Fund grants for planning and upgrading of Revere cultural facilities.

Strategy 2.7. Prioritize the development of new community spaces that meet the cultural facilities needs of Revere residents.

Strategy 2.8. Explore feasibility of establishing municipal staff position with responsibility for supporting arts and culture in Revere by helping coordinate efforts by individuals and organizations, identifying potential revenue sources to support arts and culture, and other roles as appropriate.

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**Goal 3****Expand access to arts education for all Revere residents****Programming, Partnerships & Internal City Operations**

Strategy 3.1. Explore partnerships with local and regional arts organizations to develop extra-curricular arts education opportunities by including spaces and staffing in community centers and after-school programs for instruction in visual and performing arts, media arts, fiber arts, and crafts like woodworking and metalworking, for Revere residents of all ages and abilities.

Strategy 3.2. Explore opportunities to establish public/private partnerships to expand arts education in Revere Public Schools through in-school curricula, staffing, and enrichment activities through partnerships with parents and local arts and culture organizations.

**Planning**

Strategy 3.3. Prioritize the development of arts spaces in new construction and adaptive reuse projects to provide extra-curricular arts education opportunities for Revere residents of all ages and abilities.

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**Goal 4****Increase funding for Revere's historic and cultural resources****Planning**

Strategy 4.1. Explore matching fund opportunities through partnerships with state agencies and arts and culture organizations such as Massachusetts Cultural Council, MassDevelopment, MassHumanities, Mass Historical Commission, Arts|Learning, etc. in order to build the capacity and impact of local cultural organizations.

**Land Use and Regulatory**

Strategy 4.2. Adopt the Community Preservation Act.

Strategy 4.3. Strategy 6.2. Explore municipal Percent-for-Art Ordinance to raise funds for arts and culture in Revere, incorporating the principles articulated in the Creative District vision and advancing diversity and cultural inclusion.





## Goal 5

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### Preserve and celebrate Revere's historic legacy as a destination for culture and entertainment

#### Planning

Strategy 5.1. Explore the development of a Municipal Preservation Plan as a way to expand participation in preserving historic and cultural resources, establishing a systematic approach to preservation, and initiating work of documenting Revere's cultural communities.

Strategy 5.2. Coordinate planning for Revere Creative District with cultural organizations active in the Shirley Avenue Commercial District, and expand principles of Creative District vision to the city as a whole by incorporating public art funding and cultural space into development priorities across the city.

Strategy 5.3. Expand access to funding for arts and cultural events and programming for local artists and organizations.

Strategy 5.4. Explore benefits of using a district management strategy for Revere's creative district and its naturally occurring cultural districts in its Shirley Avenue Commercial District and Downtown Civic District, looking at Main Street districts, Business Improvement Districts, and designated cultural districts as potential approaches.

Strategy 5.5. Explore feasibility of establishing local cultural district programming that provides annual funding to support cultural programming in city- or state-designated cultural districts and prioritized funding for improvements to the pedestrian realm and pedestrian and bicycle access points to districts.

Strategy 5.6. Explore the development of a travel and tourism plan, including a visitors' center, focused on capitalizing on Revere's unique assets and leveraging the expected increase in visitors to Revere.

#### Land Use and Regulatory

Strategy 5.7. Evaluate current zoning regulations for compatibility with entertainment and cultural uses and explore amendments to incentivize more entertainment and cultural activities.

Strategy 5.8. Formalize development and use vision for Revere Beach Creative District through zoning ordinance.

## Goal 6

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### Improve pedestrian access to cultural resources

#### Programming, Partnerships & Internal City Operations

Strategy 6.1. Invest in pedestrian and bicycle improvements at key points of access to walkable districts of historic and cultural resources.

Strategy 6.2. Create city-wide wayfinding templates that help unify distinct neighborhood identities across the city.



**Planning**

Strategy 6.3. Collaborate with arts and culture organizations in Revere to incorporate linguistically and visually accessible design components, socially-engaged public art, and community-led creative placemaking into wayfinding strategies to improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility and strengthen the identity of cultural destinations.

Strategy 6.4 Survey neighborhood origins and travel models of participants to existing community facilities to inform needed improvements. Explore the feasibility of conducting walk radius analyses.