

# DOWNTOWN ARTS CENTER

## CREATIVITY. COLLABORATION. COMMUNITY.

WATERVILLE  
BELIEVES IN  
THE ARTS 

**The arts as an economic engine. The arts as a vehicle to build community. The arts as a destination for residents and visitors. The arts as an expression of creativity and individuality. The arts—accessible to all.**

Over decades—through passion, creativity, collaboration, and commitment—many in Waterville have worked to shape a vibrant and diverse arts and cultural scene. From an international film festival to Broadway-quality community theater productions; from art galleries to outstanding arts education; from art house cinema to nationally touring musical acts; from a world-class library to the largest art museum in Maine—Waterville does art and culture. And it does it exceptionally well.

An impressive foundation has been built. Now is the time to bring all that happens here into sharp focus.

**A downtown arts center will shine a bright light on Waterville as a premier destination for the arts.**





96%

**IN A SURVEY** conducted in June 2018 among a robust sampling of hundreds of residents and arts patrons from Waterville and surrounding communities, **96% of respondents think the arts are important to Waterville.**

“This project is at its core a community project. Waterville’s arts and cultural institutions have thrived thanks to outstanding programming, dedicated staff, and the ongoing support of an incredible community that values the arts. This project will ensure a long and vibrant future for our treasured local arts organizations.

**Shannon Haines**  
President + CEO, Waterville Creates!

## WHAT IS THE DOWNTOWN ARTS CENTER?

**An inviting place in the heart of downtown where people of all ages can explore film, visual arts, theater, music, storytelling, and much more.**

A \$20 million project designed to bring Waterville’s beloved arts institutions together in a stunning, new facility, the Downtown Arts Center will be constructed on the current site of The Center building (formerly Stern’s department store) at 93 Main Street, directly adjacent to the Waterville Opera House/City Hall building and downtown’s central green space, Castonguay Square. Plans for the Arts Center include:

- The relocation of the Maine Film Center’s Railroad Square Cinema—**the state’s only Sundance Art House Project theater**—with three film screening rooms showing the best of independent film 364 days a year
- A **permanent home for the Maine International Film Festival**, the largest and longest running film festival in the state with an impressive list of guests that includes Ed Harris, Sissy Spacek, Jonathan Demme, Glenn Close, and Terrence Malick
- The gallery, education classroom, and clay studio of Common Street Arts, a community-based arts exhibition and education center that offers **weekly arts education classes** for youth and adults
- An **elegant physical connection** to, and greater visibility for, the historic Waterville Opera House, which produces and hosts **nearly 200 events per year**—from community theater to concerts by nationally touring musicians
- A **rehearsal space** for the Waterville Opera House that also will serve as a shared space for special events and receptions
- A new contemporary gallery of the Colby College Museum of Art, the largest art museum in the state, drawing around **50,000 visitors per year**
- A **combined box office** for the Maine Film Center, Waterville Opera House, and other arts institutions and partners
- **Flexible educational spaces** that can be used as film editing and new media classrooms, small screening rooms, rehearsal spaces, or places for workshops and lectures

## CAN YOU IMAGINE...?

### A welcoming, bustling hub of community, creativity and fun—a place where:

- Movie-goers check out the **latest exhibition** at the Common Street Arts gallery while waiting for their **first-run** arthouse film to start
- Students from Common Street Art's **Teen Tuesdays Art Club** begin their class filled with fresh inspiration from a visit to Colby's new contemporary art gallery
- Opera House visitors begin their night with an art opening, followed by a **farm-to-table dining experience** at a local restaurant before seeing a **professionally produced** musical featuring a cast of talented performers
- Parents enjoy story time with their kids at the award-winning Waterville Public Library before stopping by the Downtown Arts Center to enjoy **classic cartoons on the big screen** courtesy of the Maine Film Center
- Film festival attendees gather in an **inviting lobby overlooking downtown's central green space** and plan their art-filled day in Waterville
- Live music fans **enjoy a picnic in Castonguay Square** as they wait for the doors to open for a sold-out concert at the Opera House

## WHY NOW?

### Downtown Waterville is in the midst of an unprecedented revitalization effort.

Tens of millions of dollars are being invested in a variety of exciting projects, both public and private. A stunning RiverWalk Park is under construction at Head of Falls; Colby College is building a new multi-use residential facility that will house 200 students and faculty on Main Street in the fall of 2018; properties are being renovated to welcome new businesses; and a boutique hotel is scheduled to open in the summer of 2019.

In addition to providing state-of-the-art programmatic space, the Arts Center will add tremendous vitality, foot traffic, and economic activity to the downtown, adding to and enhancing the revitalization work that is already underway. In 2015, spending by both the City of Waterville's nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and their audiences totaled **\$6.3 million**. 96.8 percent of survey respondents indicated that the primary purpose of their visit to the City of Waterville was **"specifically to attend this arts/cultural event."**

Source: Americans for the Arts, Arts + Economic Prosperity Study, 2017

“The arts and downtown development go hand in hand. We know for a fact that the arts are an economic driver in Maine and, when embraced as a key component of community revitalization, are often the primary catalyst for increased tourism and investment. I applaud Waterville Creates! for making this commitment, and I look forward to what the future holds!”

Julie A. Richard  
Executive Director, Maine Arts Commission



“Railroad Square Cinema is such a great place—they show films that you can't see anywhere else in the state—really great independent films. I can't say enough about this place.”

Ed Harris  
Actor + MIFF Special Guest

**ACCORDING TO 2018 SURVEY RESPONDENTS**, the top words that come to mind when people think of the arts and culture scene in Waterville are:



“ Our family has lived in Waterville for eight years. With two active and curious kids, we often had to travel to Bangor or Portland to participate in arts or cultural activities and even discussed moving to more easily take advantage of such offerings. It is magical to be able to drive downtown to engage with educational and entertaining community programming. We are so grateful for all of the work Waterville Creates! does!

Jessica Graham  
resident

### MORE 2018 SURVEY RESULTS



**95% of survey respondents agree** that arts + culture should contribute to the positive image of the community; **86% of survey respondents agree** that arts and cultural activities should be available in more places; and **80% of respondents are interested** in art classes for youth.

Source: Waterville Cultural Blueprint, May 2017



### ABOUT WATERVILLE CREATES!

Established in 2014, Waterville Creates! promotes, supports, and grows our community's arts and cultural assets in order to strengthen Waterville as a vibrant creative center, increase access to creative opportunities, and advance community and economic development goals.

(207) 616-0292

[watervillecreates.org](http://watervillecreates.org)



## WHY INVEST?

### For Waterville. 🌱

The Downtown Arts Center will be a cornerstone of a revitalized downtown, helping to create a bright future for this wonderful city. A vibrant arts center that is active both day and night will be transformative—economically, aesthetically, and symbolically. A blend of the historic and the modern, this facility will honor Waterville's past while signaling the next era of prosperity.

### For Economic Growth. 🌱

The Downtown Arts Center will attract more visitors to Waterville to shop in our stores, dine in our restaurants, and stay in our hotels. Waterville Creates! and its partner organizations already serve more than 225,000 people each year – a number that is sure to grow with a modern facility and expanded programming. Longer term, we can expect to see increased civic engagement, greater economic opportunities for area residents, enhanced potential for area businesses to attract and retain employees and colleges to attract students, faculty, and staff, and increased recognition of Waterville as one of Maine's premier arts and culture destinations.

### For Community. 🌱

Area residents want to be entertained, to engage in arts and cultural activities. These experiences add value to their lives. According to the recent survey, nearly 80% are looking for entertainment and culture close to home. Waterville's arts and cultural institutions have served the community for decades with some of the best arts programming in the state, and this new facility will allow them to offer even more. More school children will have access to high-quality arts education that crosses disciplines and organizations, and more patrons of all ages will have opportunities for meaningful engagement around common themes or interests.



## BE PART OF WATERVILLE'S RENAISSANCE!

Waterville Creates! invites you to join us in building upon the strong foundation of arts programming that makes Waterville a unique and vibrant community.

To learn more or to get involved, please contact Shannon Haines, President + CEO of Waterville Creates! at (207) 509-3367 or [shannon@watervillecreates.org](mailto:shannon@watervillecreates.org).