

ARTS, CULTURE AND HISTORIC RESOURCES CHAPTER

Adopted xxx 2026



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Vision

Newmarket will be a community where arts, culture and history are not just part of a storied past but are the heart of our contemporary identity - expressing who we have been, who we are, and who we hope to be. These values will be woven into the very fabric of living, where residents, workers, students and visitors participate and take pride in the vibrant cultural life to be found in every corner of town. Newmarket's continued commitment to the arts, its culture, and historic preservation and restoration will significantly contribute to the town's unique community character.

Executive Summary

From a rich history in shipbuilding to the present-day thriving arts scene, the Town of Newmarket has evolved over time with each generation taking its turn in shaping the community. Today's Newmarket places a high value on the role that arts, culture and historic resources play in contributing to the quality of life for residents and recognizes that they also provide a destination for tourists, which strengthens the local economy. The Town prides itself in offering a myriad of arts, cultural and historic programs and events that connect people to their past, present and future – highlighting the culture of Newmarket that is unique within the Seacoast region.

The Town is fortunate to have a number of organizations focused on cultivating arts, culture and historic resources - all of which contribute to Newmarket's sense of community. The Town aspires to be a place where artists, residents, visitors, businesses can connect both in person and online, enhancing the economic and social aspects of the entire community, and engaging people who are not able to experience events or visit in person.

There are many actions and investments Newmarket can make to achieve these goals, such as developing a robust website that coordinates all of the various arts, culture and historic programs and events, including a digital library, as well as investing in a creative and engaging wayfinding system for people to access events and places from well-defined parking areas. In addition, the Town should work toward creating a recognizable town brand/identity, which may evolve organically or deliberately, to engage residents and attract visitors for the purpose of building vibrancy and financial efficiency for local artists and businesses.

Master Plan Themes

Five guiding themes emerged from the public engagement process: Vibrancy, Connectivity, Accessibility, Affordability, and Resiliency. Each Master Plan chapter uses the themes to explore the subject matter from different perspectives, helping to focus community goals and actions.

Vibrancy

For Arts, Culture and Historic Resources, a vibrant community provides spaces where people can interact and connect to their past, present and future, engage in community activities, and attract tourists of all ages. A vibrant community recognizes that ongoing investment in arts, culture and historic preservation is a priority, provides opportunities for public performances, artistic education and engagement, and supports individual artists and their ability to thrive financially.

The Town of Newmarket occupies a rich and vibrant place on the New Hampshire seacoast. In 2027 the Town will celebrate 300 years as its own municipality, where people from all over the world have sought economic opportunities and a better life in a beautiful setting. The Town's status as a desirable place to live is rooted in its history and the present-day vitality of its people. The Town's most attractive attribute and its greatest source of strength comes from its people and how tightly knit and proud they are of their community, which uniquely sits on the edge of the Lamprey River. Newmarket's vibrant downtown is host to public arts and cultural offerings, as well as thriving local performance venues such as the Stone Church, Millspace and Rockingham Ballroom, which together help to attract visitors and strengthen local business opportunities. The Downtown Riverfront Chapter examines the history and present day uses in Newmarket's downtown riverfront area and establishes goals and actions for maintaining its vibrancy including "Celebrate the social, economic, and natural history of the Downtown Riverfront area" and "Incorporate arts and culture into riverfront improvements and activities."

Residents place a high value on the role that arts, culture and history play in contributing to vibrancy. This was confirmed by public input collected during the Master Plan Survey and workshops. The top cultural resource priorities selected by respondents were the creation of outdoor and indoor venues for performing arts, art festivals, walks, showcases or tours, and murals to showcase Newmarket history and culture (see Appendix E).

Participants at the September 2024 Master Plan workshop identified potential locations for performing arts venues mostly near and within existing community assets. Potential outdoor areas include Leo A. Landroche Memorial Field - Jr/Sr Highschool; Newmarket Elementary School; Schanda Park; and the Public Works Department.

Indoor areas include South Main Street (near Jr/ Sr Highschool); The Loft; and Beech Street Extension.

Respondents to the Master Plan Survey also identified the types of cultural events that most appealed most to them, which included performance art, art appreciation activities, historical tributes and recognition, and art making experiences (see Appendix E). Newmarket hosts a wide array of cultural activities which encourage social engagement and connection (see Appendix E). These events contribute

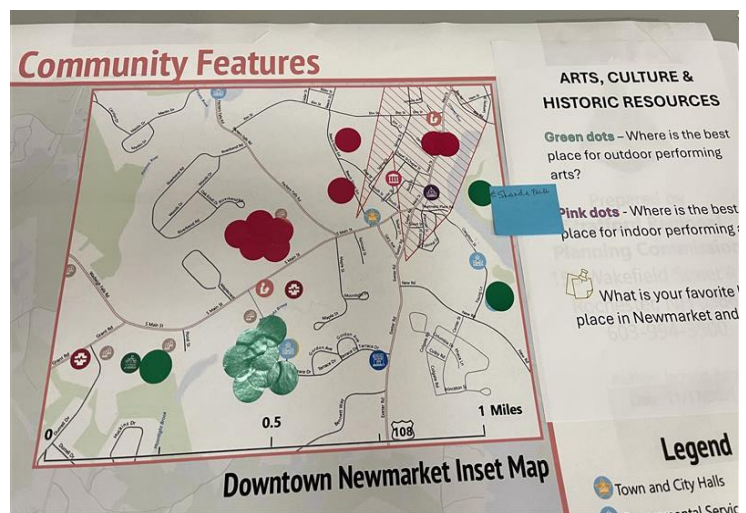


Figure 1 September 2024 Master Plan workshop results

to Newmarket's vibrancy and would not be possible without the committed and engaged residents who work to develop, promote and host them. Newmarket is fortunate to have a rich foundation from which to showcase its resources throughout town and room to continue to engage future generations of residents and visitors.

Opportunities to expand arts, culture and historic offerings include the addition of murals in key downtown locations such as Elm Street, along and near Main Street, as well as the at the Library. As noted above, the community would support the development of additional outdoor spaces for public engagement throughout town, including the Historic Firehouse Project, Cheswill Monument at Arbor Park, Vietnam Memorial, as well as at the Library and schools. In addition, art installations should be considered as part of any new public projects along the River Front, Heron Point, Schanda Park, as well as other redevelopment projects, Arbor Park, and in appropriate rights of way, South Main St Extension, Civil War Memorial, and in pocket parks.

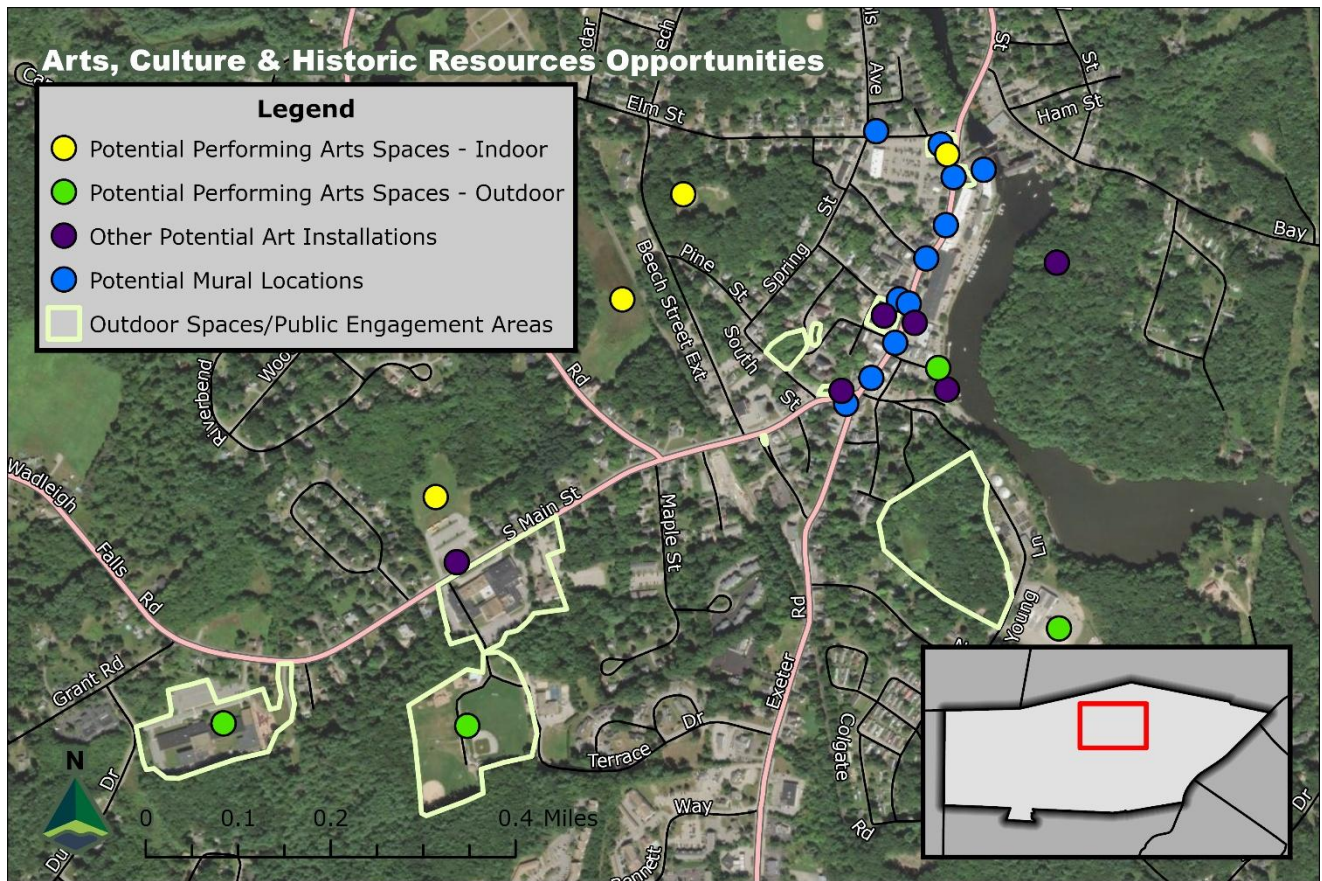


Figure 2 Potential arts, culture & tourism locations

Other future activities could include more arts-driven festivals, where people come from neighboring communities and beyond to enjoy live music (indoors and out), to browse and purchase art from gallery spaces and at art walk events, and to attend ticketed and free community theatre performances

Vibrancy Goals

1. Create fertile ground for a vibrant and sustainable arts and culture ecosystem in which both existing and new artists are welcomed, recognized and supported for their essential contribution to creating and maintaining a thriving, healthy and innovative town.
2. Newmarket should be recognized as a destination for the arts, driving tourist visitation and strengthening the local business environment. Consider opportunities to maximize the downtown stretch of the Lamprey River as a festival environment that would enhance the draw.
3. Foster an appreciation of historic preservation as a vital aspect of community character. Leverage Newmarket's history as a source and springboard for artistic expression in a variety of forms—visual, literary or performative.

Connectivity

For Arts, Culture and Historic resources, connectivity is experienced through organizations collaborating to bring educational and cultural events and programs to Newmarket, and through the intentional act of placemaking, creating spaces both on-line and in person, where artists, residents, visitors, businesses can connect, enhancing the economic and social aspects of the entire community.

Newmarket's priority for history, arts and culture is evident in the strong organizations that focus on these efforts, including the New Market Historical Society, the Arts, Culture and Tourism Commission, the Millspace, Newmarket Main Street Corporation, Newmarket Public Library, Friends of the Newmarket Library, Bloomin' Newmarket, among others. Cultural events and efforts focusing on connecting people to their past, present and future include Newmarket's 300th Anniversary celebrations and accompanying book, Elm Street Mural Renovation and more.



Figure 3 Mural at Willey House Central Park (Image: Newmarket Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission)

While the Town's organizations often plan, host and carry out community cultural events together, there is room for improving collaboration, connections and relationships. This could include making sure there is cross representation on boards to facilitate communication or simply meeting on a regular basis to share ideas and to understand each other's action priorities. Collaborative fundraising is also a way for groups

to work together to develop, write and partner on funding opportunities through Town, State and Federal grants, sponsorships, and other contributions.

Connectivity occurs by creating spaces, both on-line and in person, where artists, residents, visitors, and businesses can connect, enhancing the economic and social aspects of the entire community. Improving the range of digital options available for people who are not able to experience events or visit in person expands the way the community connects with each other and visitors from near and far. This could include developing a robust Arts, Culture and Tourism website that explores the murals, art installations, historic buildings and other locations in town, filming and streaming cultural events, and promoting and enhancing the resources that exist on New Market Historical Society or Newmarket Main Street Corporation websites.

Connectivity Goals

1. Encourage town policymaking and practices to integrate creative thinking into the work of every municipal department and all planning efforts.
2. Collaborate across institutions, sectors and organizations, to generate excitement about, interaction with, and demand for resources to support arts, culture, historic resources and tourism.
3. Organize arts networking events to connect the arts community and strengthen collaboration and participation among artists and arts organizations/businesses.

Affordability and Accessibility

For Arts, Culture and Historic resources, an affordable and accessible community provides opportunities for people of all economic and social backgrounds to enjoy and participate in community programs, events and activities.

Through the redevelopment process of the mill buildings, the Town requested that affordable live-work spaces be incorporated into the construction. The mills have been successfully renovated and are thriving, however, the status of affordable options should be further investigated. Newmarket should continue to encourage the creation of these types of affordable places. Newmarket's rich arts, culture and historic resources are generally available to residents and tourists of all ages free or at a reasonable cost. Examples of these resources include the New Market Historical Society's downtown walking tour and the Newmarket Main Street Corporation's Historic Plaque Project.

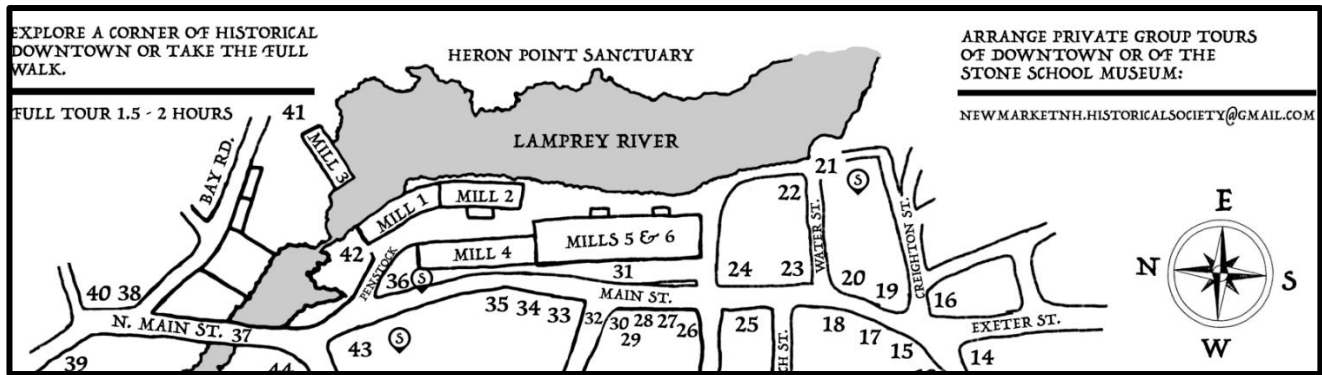


Figure 4 Newmarket Historical Society Walking Tour

As noted in the Connectivity section, there are many organizations that foster engagement through community programs, events and activities. Publicity and outreach for these events is vital so that people know what is happening in town and can participate in person or virtually. A centralized communication system is needed for people to be informed about programs, activities and events. This could include easily accessible and strategically placed information kiosks, as well as an online hub of information that includes a digital library for those unable to physically access public forums and activities.

Along with a communication system, it is also important for people and visitors to be able to know where to park and how to get to the event or place from parking areas. Newmarket should investigate developing a comprehensive wayfinding system that directs people along safe walkable routes from parking areas to their destination using maps or other creative signage. The Transportation and the Downtown Riverfront Chapters establish goals prioritizing the creation of clear and prominent wayfinding for downtown and as well as throughout town not only to expand navigation and walkability, but to also bolster community identity using creative and engaging signage. Helping visitors to find unique art and culture installations throughout downtown would add to Newmarket's unique downtown experience.

Accessibility / Affordability Goals

1. Engage people of all ages and abilities in existing and new art and historical experiences.
2. Create a centralized information system that coordinates online and in person outreach for all Newmarket organizations that is easily accessible for residents and tourists.
3. Cultivate a town where all cultural and ethnic traditions and expressions are respected, promoted and where opportunities to engage with arts and culture are accessible to all.

Resiliency

For Arts, Culture and Historic Resources, resiliency means that these resources remain a priority in civic life and that the next generation be engaged in their continued stewardship.

Newmarket enjoys a solid foundation of organizations, volunteers, residents, businesses and public institutions that together form the fabric of Newmarket's cultural identity. To ensure that this continues for future generations, Newmarket should continue to invest time and resources to support these efforts.

The economic and social impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences is well documented by many sources, including Americans for the Arts annual Arts and Economic Prosperity surveys. Surveys completed in the Seacoast region demonstrate an appreciation for how the arts and culture impact the social well-being of the community and its residents. Respondents valued venues and events as pillars of the community, inspiring pride, and worthy of support for future generations, and felt that private and public investment in arts, culture and historic resources brings a return on investment.

Newmarket's cultural institutions are considered community assets, but they are also businesses. They depend on a healthy mix of residents and visitors to sustain them and help them prosper. A vibrant arts culture keeps residents spending locally and encourages visitors which helps strengthen the economy. The Town of Newmarket can support the local economy by partnering with local organizations and businesses to develop an engaging marketing campaign to promote the town as a destination for arts, culture and historic resources.

As noted throughout this chapter, Newmarket enjoys the energy, time and attention of committed and enthusiastic volunteers, businesses, and municipal staff. They are stewards of the town's arts, cultural and historic resources and sustain the programs and events that occur throughout the year. Newmarket should continue to invest in preserving and enhancing these resources and foster an atmosphere where organizations and programs can evolve and engage new generations.

Resiliency Goals

1. Integrate arts, culture and historic resources into all aspects of civic life, inspiring residents and visitors to value, practice and reap the benefits of creativity in their individual lives and in their community.
2. Create a marketing campaign to promote the town as a destination for arts, culture and historic resources.
3. Ensure that historic resources are preserved for future generations.