RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASING THE RESPONSE RATE OF AN
ARTS SURVEY

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

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by

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1. arts
2. survey
3. urban renewal

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Abstract:

This project was a study in maximizing the response rate of a survey of the arts community in Worcester. Data regarding presentation, incentives, follow-ups and publicity was collected through focus groups and interviews with area artists and supporters. The results of the survey will be used to encourage developers to invest in the arts district. This is the first of a two-phase initiative; the second will utilize our recommendations to conduct the survey itself.

Acknowledgements:

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1. Introduction

During the early 1800s the city of Worcester became a major textile hub, which later flourished as the industrial revolution made its way there. Today the landscape of Worcester still reflects this period with many rundown factory buildings as well as its railroads and the Black Stone canal that connect it to other major cities. As we have moved out of the industrialization era many parts of the city that were at one time prosperous with production are no longer being well maintained and are left as rundown areas. Nowadays these areas desperately need urban revitalization. Worcester needs to be updated to reflect the new areas of prosperity which do not include industry and factory work. One of the ways in which this can be accomplished is through bringing out the wonderful culture Worcester has to offer.

In order to do this the city of Worcester has come up with four major goals that it hopes to accomplish. In particular, one of these is to create a thriving arts district located in the Main South area of downtown Worcester. This area of Worcester currently has many old mill buildings that are not being fully used and can potentially be renovated to help the city prosper. These structures are low cost, since they are currently unused, and also many of the structures have architectural significance making it a great place to renovate. This is something that will take time, but if successfully completed will drastically rework the landscape of a segment of Main South, making the streets safer and more appealing, and helping Worcester's economy. To attain this goal the city has created a master plan for the creation of the arts district. The plan lays out the major goals they wish to accomplish.

In order to help the larger goal, it is important for developers to being investing in the arts district. However, developers are not confident that artists will respond to these

investments, and they are not sure what facilities the artists will need. To encourage developers it is important to collect and make available to them data on the needs and desires of artists. This information must be collected by conducting a survey of the artists in the region to find out how willing they are to move in, how much they are willing to pay for live/work space, and other details.

Past surveys of arts communities have had a very low response rate and have failed to gather sufficient data. To prevent a similar scenario, this project has been divided into two phases. Phase 1 was assigned the task of forming a set of recommendations on the structure, dissemination and other attributes of the survey that will maximize the response from the target population. Phase 2 will implement these recommendations and actually conduct the survey.

In the long run we hope that by providing the city with this information they will be able to create a thriving arts district, which will liven up a portion of Worcester. We expect that the information provided will encourage developers to want participate in the formation of an arts district.

The following document shows the results of Phase 1 of the art survey project. It presents the research, the process, the data and a careful analysis of the data. It details four main points to consider in conducting a survey of this nature: presentation, incentives, publicity, and follow-ups. Finally, this manuscript offers recommendations of surveying approaches that, if followed by Phase II, will generate a response from the survey that is sufficient to provide convincing data for the benefit of developers, investors, and promoters of the Worcester arts district.

2. Literature Review

The vision of an arts district in Worcester is not one that merely appeared, but rather developed over time from the passion and creativity of the artists in our community and those supporting them. It was only five years ago that similar plan was proposed for the Green Island district of Worcester; however, the residents of that area quickly turned down the project in the interest of leaving their community unchanged. (Bongiorni, F., Horseman, S., Patalano, P., and Riccio, J., 1998) This disappointment may have left the arts district project homeless, but it did not break the spirit that fueled the endeavor from the beginning. Led by a motivated Arts District Task Force, the project redeveloped into a Master Plan detailing the goals, plans, supporters, and most importantly, the new location of the arts district (Arts District Master Plan: Worcester, Massachusetts, 2002).

2. 1 New England Council Creative Economy Initiative

The Creative Economy Initiative (CEI) is an effort put forth by the New England Council over the past four years that explores the economic potential in the creative sector of the region and attempts to fuel and encourage its growth.

A study published in June 2000 by CEI found that individuals and enterprises that deal with cultural products supported 3.5% of the total job-base in New England. As shown in the figure below, this amounts to more jobs than other significant industries such as the software industry and the medical industry, and is comparable to the number of jobs supported by New England's computer equipment industry (Becker, Beate, director, 2001).

EMPLOYMENT COMPARISON

Source: US Census, 1997 Economic Census and County Business Patterns.
Cluster definitions based on Massachusetts Technology Collaborative *Index of the Massachusetts Innovation Economy.*
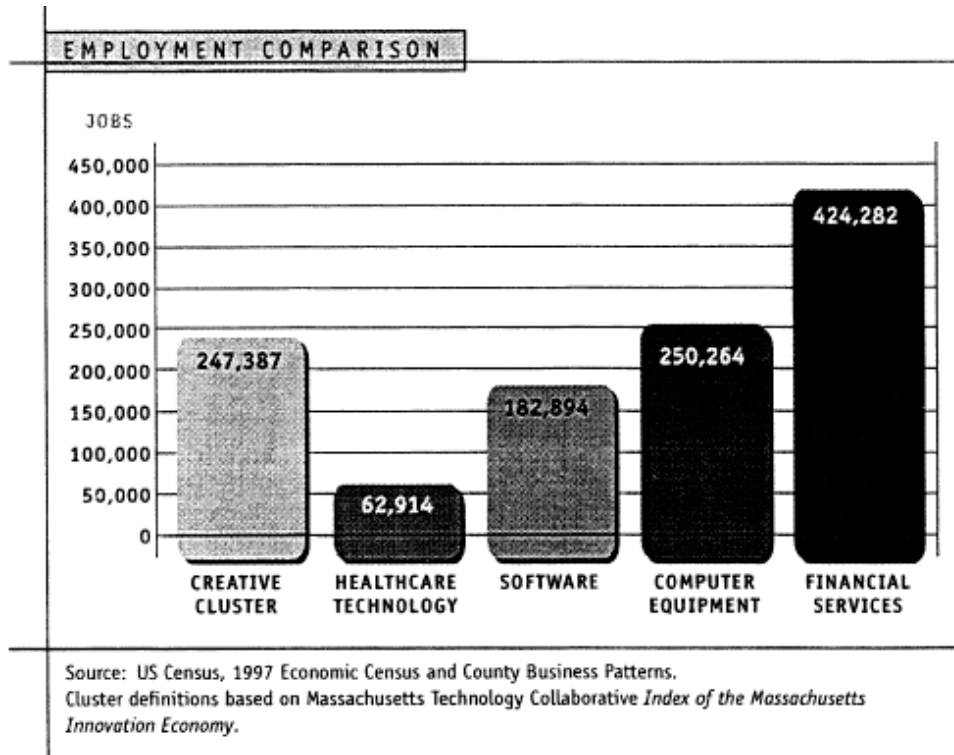
Figure 1: Employment distribution chart

In addition, the creative sector was found to have high potential in the future, showing a growth rate of 14% – almost twice as much as the average rate of job growth in other industries (8%).

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH RATE

Source: US Census, US County Business Patterns, 1993 and 1997.
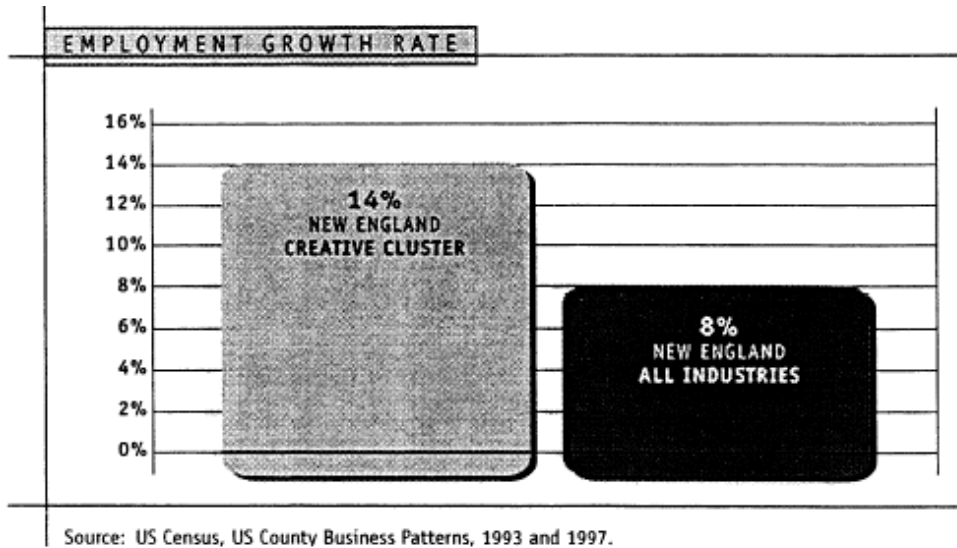
Figure 2: Employment growth rate comparison

In June of 2001, the CEI proposed a "blueprint for investment in New England's Creative Economy." It suggested that by recognizing and investing in the creative sector, the creative sector could realize its full economic potential. A strategic plan was developed that transformed research on the best ways to invest into a strategic plan for development. The *Blueprint* set forth Four Goals for strategic development, each backed by a number of initiatives, and claimed that the realization of these goals would encourage economic development in the creative sector and thus maximize its ability to contribute to "regional economic competitiveness and quality of life (Becker, Beate, director, 2001)". The goals included the promotion of the economic development in the creative economy through outreach, the development of the creative market through establishing relationships with other sectors, and the development of support, awareness and structure within the arts and culture sector itself.

Goal Four of the Creative Economy Initiative is to "enhance the economic and social quality of life in New England by fostering a rich arts and cultural environment (Becker, Beate, director, 2001)". Initiatives supporting Goal Four emphasize the development of *Creative Communities*, defined as geographic regions with concentration of creative workers, creative businesses and cultural organizations. This goal directly relates to the development of an arts district within Worcester.

2.2 Worcester Arts District

The Arts District Task Force, in conjunction with ARTSWorcester and the City of Worcester, has prepared a document entitled the "Arts District Master Plan 2002." The ideas proposed in the Master Plan are intended to "offer a creative, tangible approach to stimulate cultural activity for the Main Street neighborhood in the District (Master Plan

2002)." The Worcester Arts District is a developing *cultural community* as described by

the Creative Economy Initiative, and is intended to take advantage of the cultural

economy in the Worcester area.

2.2.1 Potential of the Worcester Arts District

Worcester's Arts District displays considerable potential, and already contains the

ingredients for a successful arts community. Worcester has a rich foundation of arts and

culture organizations, with over forty located within the city limits. The Arts District is

located between Clark University (houses over 1500 residents on campus) on the

Southwest, and downtown Worcester on the Northeast, and will bridge the current gap

between these two major centers.

At first glance, this area appears run down and uninviting. There are numerous

buildings in various physical states lining the main road, many of which house small

shops on their ground levels while upper floors remain neglected. Upon further

inspection, the splendor of this neighborhood becomes more apparent as the unique

architecture and character of the buildings is recognized. It should be noted that eight

structures in this locale have been designated as historical sites, which in itself is a

testament to the former strength and vibrancy of this neighborhood. In its present state,

the area's past is hardly reflected through vacant lots, boarded windows, and frequency of

illegal activity. It has become an uninviting region that discourages citizens from

appreciating the potential of its tired buildings and busy streets. Initiative must be taken

to restore this "*urban jewel*" to its former self.

This is where the proposed Worcester Arts Community enters the cause for the

Main South locality. While an arts district is clearly intended to promote artists, its

potential effects on this bleak area can easily promote the character and positive offerings of the existing neighbor as well. Many of the neglected structures and spaces can be transformed into maintained workspaces and common green areas, fit for public performances or gatherings. The existing inhabitants - both people and places - of the district will begin to receive recognition and support from the entire community as the area becomes more attractive to the public. Perhaps most importantly, this will create a safe haven nestled in the heart of Worcester that can rid the district of crime and allow it to thrive as it once did.

The Arts District is easily accessible through public transportation, including RTA bus routes (three run along the district) and the consortium shuttle (an intercampus shuttle connecting local colleges and universities). The immediate location has much vacant space, including fourteen buildings that are currently vacant or underused, and seventeen parking lots that can be renovated or converted into developer sites. Currently in poor condition, the Arts District has great potential: the Junction Shop Manufacturing district, for example, has historical significant to the city, contains over 537,000 square feet of large floor building space, is in prominent and visibly location from Route 146, and can be strongly linked with downtown.

In addition to a high-potential location, Worcester demographics are encouraging. Although Worcester has suffered a decline in population aged in its 20s (largely due to college graduates leaving to find jobs elsewhere), there is a steadily increasing number of people between the ages of 35-54 ("baby-boomers"), which are typically peak earning years.

A significant number of people and organizations exist to draw from. According to research done in 1996 by the Massachusetts Cultural Council:

- There were more than 3,000 non-profit cultural organizations in the state.
- They employed a combined total of 43,500 people.
- Their combined audience attendance exceeded 45 million.
- They had a $2.56 billion impact on the state's economy.

2.2.2 Downtown redevelopment options

The potential benefits of an arts district located in Worcester are not limited to the neighborhood housing it, as they can be expanded and applied to the city and surrounding towns as well. The Master Plan indicates that development of this project can lead to the strengthening of the local economy through new housing, commercial, and employment opportunities.

Along with the renovation of the structures and many neglected places in the area comes the availability of the square footage necessary to create both low income or artist housing and additional small-business space. Moreover, this new space will also be suited for institutions such as cultural museums and performing arts schools, which will not only benefit the artists, but also the entire city as a whole. As these plans come to fruition, the demand for new workers will increase as well, illustrating just how critical to the community this initiative is.

The Arts District may be just what Worcester needs in order to implement the much-needed redevelopment in abandoned and underused downtown locations. Worcester has long been considering options for redevelopment. Greene, a journalist for

Worcester Business Journal, summarizes the three major redesign models for city downtowns. The first option is a high budget entertainment center – the development of a theme park or similar complex in the downtown. This model requires high demand and a high budget, and involves a large risk in the part of the developers. In addition to these requisites that Worcester cannot provide, the complex does not tend to be rooted in the community; it does not work with or help the local people or organizations. The second option is a festival marketplace, such as the Mall in Union station. This option tends to clash with the downtown itself – the result is not unlike the current Worcester common outlets, which a local describes as being "in the middle of downtown Worcester, yet divorced from it… walking around the Outlets is like trying to get into a walled fort" (Greene, 1998).

The last model for city downtown redevelopment is an arts district. Not an overnight investment, the arts district develops out of a close cooperation between local organizations, particularly those in the arts sector, and the government. Whereas the first two models follow the trend of linking the entertainment concept to merchandising in order to lure people back to the abandoned downtown areas, the arts district model has the potential of truly benefiting not just the economy, but also the local organizations and the health and vitality of the community.

Success stories include Providence's Arts District and New York City's SoHo district that over the years have converted large amounts of underutilized factory space and abandoned buildings into neighborhoods full of life and culture. Admittedly, however, those success stories are possibly different from Worcester's situation: both are

major corporate and political centers and both have a solid institutional and student base in downtown.

With the renowned Worcester Museum of Art as an anchor, and areas such as the Heywood Gallery -- which has developed by itself into an area of the artist community with galleries, studios and activities -- perhaps Worcester does have what it needs to develop the arts district.

2.3 Where Do We Fit In?

While the Master Plan for an arts district in Worcester sounds like nothing less than a blessing, the project requires an extensive amount of support – both personally and financially. Therefore, it must be determined that this plan is as feasible and necessary as it seems before the appropriate support can be invested. Participants contributing to the community must be assured that their efforts will not be wasted. Developers and investors must be presented solid evidence proving that a project as extensive as an arts district is worth their while. Perhaps the best method of supplying this venture with the concrete data that it needs is by approaching the artists that it is intended for, as they are ultimately the driving force that will maintain this community once developed. This is where our efforts enter into the plan to create a functional arts district in the city of Worcester. Our research determined the population most influential in this brand of community; whether it consisted of purely city artists, or those reaching beyond county or even state lines. Given this population, the goal is to learn from a sample of the group what is truly required to make this district appealing to them. Obviously, the more interest a given design attracts, the more likely a developer will be to take the project on. The difficulty in this task is deciding upon the most effective method of reaching our

artistic population. To accomplish this, we took advantage of the many resources

available regarding this kind of study: texts illustrating various methods, flawed past

surveys, and most importantly, members of the existing community.

2.4 Why is a Survey Necessary?

The developers investing in the creation of the Worcester Arts District need

concrete evidence that it will be a success. Results from a successful survey would show

the interest that local artists have in the arts community, and provide important

information regarding the number of artists willing to move to the district, the types of

resources they need, and how much they are willing to pay. The developers could be

confident that investing in the area is a good idea based on the results of a successful

survey that accurately represents the artists in the community.

2.5 The Sample Population

The first step in planning a survey is to define exactly whom the survey is going

to reach. We know that the survey should go out to local artists. It is more useful to

determine what exactly is meant by an "artist" then to simply use that broad term.

Should artists include painters, musicians, actors, dancers, and architects? Exactly how

many different groups of artists need to be included in the survey? Furthermore, how far

should the survey reach? Should local Worcester artists as well as surrounding cities

artists be included? Should all the artists in the state (Moser C. A., 1972)?

In deciding how large of a population to survey the most important concern is

whether the sample is "large enough so that it will be representative of the population

from which it comes" (Fink, 1985). The group must also be an adequate number so that

differences between sub groups can be identified. In the case of the Arts District survey,

the population should be large enough to notice trends between different types of artists. For example, a painter who does large pieces of art may be more interested in having large work space then someone who is a musician and can work from home. Differences among sub populations help determine such needs as how much space is desirable, cost each person is willing to pay for live/work space, and transportation requirements among other things.

The sample population needs to be one that will generate the most accurate and useful response. In the past, mail surveys have been conducted in which the target population being surveyed produced an extremely low response rate. The past survey of Worcester artists was only completed by 10% of the population. (Worcester Artist Survey, 1998) Such a low response cannot guarantee accurate data.

2.6 Generating the Best Response Rate

The two biggest problems associated with a sample survey are non-response bias and response bias. Response bias refers to errors in the information due to people's incorrect answers. This can be because they do not wish to give out personal feelings on the matter, they are not paying attention to the survey, or they simply make a mistake. Response bias is not something we have control over. What we can try to control is the non-response bias: bias caused by members of the target population not taking the time to complete the survey and therefore their opinions cannot be taken into account. While it is possible to control non-response bias to some extent it is "a problem no investigator of human populations can escape; his survey material is not, nor ever can be, entirely under his control and he can never get information about more then a apart of it." (Moser C. A.,

1972) This is what caused the inaccurate data produced by previous surveys taken in Worcester as well as Boston.

The people who do not take the time to fill out the survey often differ from the ones who do. This means that the people who do fill out the survey are probably already interested in the idea which is why they are willing to put time into it. Alternatively, people who do not fill out the survey have no interest in the matter; therefore we cannot assume that any of the results are accurate without an extremely high response rate. To overcome this non-response bias, it is important to create a survey with the maximum possible likelihood that a recipient chooses to respond to the survey. Several items were considered: the presentation of the survey, the incentives offered for filling out the survey, the medium through which the survey is disseminated, and follow-ups for people who fail to respond (Petruccelli, J., Nandram, B., Chen, M. 1999).

The survey's appearance and presentation must be designed to generate the best possible response. It must take into account the structure of the questions (multiple choice, or open-ended?), the appearance of the survey itself, and an appropriate length for the type of respondents. Things that should be considered are the amount of time a person will have to spend on a survey and whether they will pay attention to the entire thing (Fink, 1985). Something that is about two pages long and only takes a few minutes to fill out may be considered short to the person conducting the survey but actually be very long for some people. If this is the case, the people will not want to take the time to complete it, which could produce non-response bias. Finding a good balance between a survey long enough to collect the required information yet short enough to keep the

interest of the respondents proves to be a tough task in implementing any survey (Moser C. A., 1972).

The second and perhaps most important point we considered was building *incentives* into the survey process. People are rarely receptive to surveys, and are far more likely to complete one if rewarded to do so. Although the idea of a thriving arts district is in itself an incentive for many people, it is not immediate or guaranteed. Furthermore, responses from people who are uninterested in the arts district are also necessary. Thus, providing an immediate incentive that does not bias the survey can be crucial for a successful survey.

A person that has some type of incentive is more likely to do what you ask of them. The incentive should be a certain and immediate reward; the possibility of an Arts District is not a sufficient incentive in itself because it is not by any means immediate nor does a respondent have any assurance that it will ever become a reality.

Finally it may be necessary to perform *follow-ups*, such as reminder mailings to people who have not yet responded. However, follow-ups require additional funds to carry out which may not be available. When possible, it is a good idea to conduct some type of follow-up survey with hopes of having a higher response rate. When a person receives information repeatedly they will be more familiar with it and possibly more willing to participate in the survey (Petruccelli, J., Nandram, B., Chen, M. 1999).

2.7 Determining the Survey Type

A variety of different survey methods are available, some of which may be more useful then others. The different types considered were: email or web based, mail, face-

to-face interviews, and phone interviews. A combination of survey types will reach the most people.

Past surveys were all disseminated through mail and phone. Since there was such a low response rate, it may be best to use one of the other methods or combine them. Since our target population will most likely be somewhat large, it is probably best to stay away from phone or face-to-face interviews due to the amount of time we have. This leads us to the possibly of E-mail or web-based surveys.

Using the Internet to conduct a survey has many advantages. For one thing, it is much more time and cost effective then any other survey method. The transmission of the survey is almost instantaneous. With no postage or supply expenses such as ink and paper, the web makes surveying cost a great deal less. Different writers have had different views on how much is really saved by doing a web survey because of how much goes into the programming. Since in our particular case the programming would be done at no cost, then the price for conducting web surveys would be less then that of mail surveys (Schonlau, M., Fricker, R., & Elliott, M. 2002).

Schonlau, Fricker, and Elliott noted that studies have shown the best response rates come from either mail surveys or a combination survey which uses mail and the web, rather then just web or just email surveys. When someone has a choice between which method is best for him or her, they would be more likely to complete the survey.

2.8 The next step

With this information as the foundation of our work, we developed a methodology to successfully complete our goals for the project.

3. Methodology

3.1   Introduction

Our goal was to use data collected from local artists to recommend a way to maximize participation and response in a survey conducted by the city of Worcester. This information will also be utilized to validate the need for an active arts district in Worcester to developers, and to provide focus for the city based on the needs of the artists. Three core objectives must be considered to reach this goal: the survey's sample population, the type of survey used, and the incentives to be utilized. The correct combination of each will allow for the highest response rate in the survey.

3.2   What Sample Will Be Used?

It is critical in any brand of study that the variety of sample utilized to collect data is best representative of the entire population and all of its facets. While considering this idea, the sample must also be constructed to maintain the greatest magnitude of response possible. This has been especially problematic in past surveying endeavors carried out in the communities of artists both in this region and the entire state. In this section, we must distinguish our sample population in demographic and geographic terms, specify our sampling strategy based upon the information we are striving to collect, and identify the kind of study we plan to undertake.

3.2.1   Sample Population

The first challenge involved in this process is determining our sample population. Several previous surveys have touched upon various kinds of artisan and broad geographic reaches. To characterize the best possible population for our study, we must delve into further concerns. Demographically, the ideal population is fairly clear to

outline. The information we desire is not sensitive to a specific discipline of artist. For instance, the studio space we wish to see created in the Main South region is not for oil painters only, but rather for any artist that can use it. Therefore, our population will be all inclusive of any practicing artist: painter, musician, dancer, sculptor, writer, or otherwise. The more difficult issue in selecting the population we wish to work with was that of geographic reach.

We had several options here, in that we could study artists in the city of Worcester, or those within the surrounding county, or even artists statewide. On top of that, we could even begin to consider the region of southern New Hampshire to be within our "borders." We recognized, however, that maximum participation is essential to this portion of our study. If we chose to reach *too far* in distance with our population, then it became more likely for us to experience the failure of individuals to participate. This especially holds true if our study requires contributors to meet with us within Worcester for interviewing purposes.

Conversely, limiting our population to a region *too small* would also have hindered us from reaching our desired goal, as we wished to achieve the greatest breadth of responses and insights possible. With these problems of borders in mind, we decided to select a middle ground as our population. Geographically speaking, we drew our sample of artists from the region of Worcester County, which includes not only the city, but also several suburbs and smaller towns. This population designation was agreed upon at an Arts Advisory Team meeting, as past experience has shown a healthy interest from the artists in this county towards the city of Worcester and its success in the arts.

3.2.2 Sampling Strategy

After determining the overall sample population we will drew from, we selected the smaller sample we planned to work with. This leads to the consideration of a sampling strategy that will best fit the study we plan to pursue. Our goal in this analysis was to determine the most appropriate and effective methods for reaching *every* discipline contained within the artists' community. Therefore, we had to take into account the possibility that representatives of a certain discipline may be lost if sampling was done incorrectly.

It was likely that the most painless form of sampling is the *simple random sample*. Through its design, "*the defining property of a simple random sample is that every possible combination of cases has an equal chance of being included in the sample.*" (Singleton, 1968) This suggested that the makeup of a given sample could contain any of the members of the population. While this approach certainly seemed fair in application creating a sample of the population, it had potential flaws, especially in our situation. Based upon the definition, it is fair to predict that due the blind nature of this kind of sampling, our final sample could realistically exclude a small or minor discipline of the arts. This result would be detrimental to establishing a method of effectively reaching *all* disciplines involved in the project. It was more important to reach every discipline than it was to accurately represent the proportions of the population. With this in mind, we tried to consider an approach that allowed us to include every field represented in the population of artists.

This led us to the concept of *stratified random sampling*. In this method, according to Singleton, "*the population is first subdivided into two or more mutually*

exclusive segments, called strata, based on the categories of one or combination of relevant variables." This suggested that we could designate our *strata* through this kind of sampling technique to represent each discipline within the community. He goes on to say that *"simple random samples then are drawn from each stratum, and these sub samples are joined to form the complete, stratified sample."* By employing this approach, we would end up with a sample that contained representatives from every walk of artist. As a team, we decided that we would like to take this technique a step further, and eliminate the proportionality from each stratum. By doing this, we will not only have representatives from each field, but also an equal number of contributors for each discipline. For our goal, this seemed most appropriate, as it allowed us to receive an equivalent level of input from each field. It was not our intent to represent the population proportionally, but to represent every nature of artist so that none are overlooked in the construction of further studies. This style of stratified random sample is specifically classified as *disproportionate* for that very reason.

3.2.3 Most Appropriate Study for This Sample

Once we had selected this specific sampling strategy, we identified the type of study that will best take advantage of the sample. The ideal scenario under consideration involved conducting face-to-face interviews. This approach would have allowed maximum flexibility between our participants and us. Should an individual say something of particular interest, we could follow it further on the spot instead of leaving it isolated to the margin of their question sheet. A variety of personal interaction may also lend a more appealing, informal feel to the entire process, which will hopefully make the participants both more comfortable and more willing to share their ideas with us. The

glaring disadvantage to this approach was that, especially if our sample size is quite large, we would not have the time or resources at our disposal necessary to carry out an interview with each individual. Instead of abandoning the concept of face-to-face interviews, we found a way to adapt it to include a number of participants during a single session.

This is where the notion of the *focus group* format entered our planning. By design, a focus group allows for several participants to come together at a single meeting and interact with not only those administering the group, but also the other contributors. Here, we can present our questions to the participants only once, and still receive several answers and insights. Perhaps the most valuable feature of a focus group setting is the inherent interaction that will occur between the participants. Where a single answer is given in the one-on-one environment, an entire range of varied answers may surface within a group. From there, contributors may be observed arguing their cases to one another in the effort of swaying their colleagues. The thoughts that are expressed during these exchanges are often the most intriguing and constructive of the entire session. It became apparent that, in order to achieve the most useful inputs in the most effective manner, we should strive to structure several focus groups for gathering the information we desire.

We had many resources available to us for holding these groups as far as location was concerned. Barring any scheduling conflicts, we were confident to be able to conduct a number of these sessions at the ARTSWorcester locale in Main South – a logical choice considering the study we are performing. Other possibilities included city hall (for smaller groups) and conference rooms on the campus of WPI. Through the

team's previous experience with focus groups, we determined that an ideal group size ranges from six to ten people. The line of questioning, of course, was aimed at ascertaining the specific techniques these artists feel will be most effective for reaching their peers in future studies. We wanted to learn the ways in which a survey appeals to them and how to generate a peak interest in participation. By starting with general questions tailored to the particular information we needed to obtain, we were able to shape them in such a way that encouraged the most detailed and thoughtful responses from the contributors. We will discuss the specifics of these questions further on. The information we acquired will be essential to following survey teams as they try to extract data regarding the specific needs of artists in the proposed Main South district. The success of their work is highly dependent upon a large response rate, which classifies our study as equally critical.

3.3   *What Type of Survey Will Be Used?*

In trying to determine the most effective way to collect data it was also essential to use the correct type of surveying method. Many different survey methods were considered as possibilities. In deciding which method was best suited for our project, Singleton suggested that three main things should be considered: "*search objectives, units of analysis, and sampling plan.*" When considering the units of analysis, we recognized that the most effective surveying method was different for each member of the population. Since it is practically impossible to gather all this information and extremely impractical to attempt to implement using a different survey for different people, we had to determine which method was best suited for the population as a whole. There had to be one type of survey that will provide us with the most factual data as well

as be from a sufficient quantity of people in the population whom we decide to sample. By recommending the most appropriate survey method, we can maximize the response rate and provide developers with the best possible information.

Our sampling plan required that we reach a very large number of artists not necessarily in a central location and spread through the entire county. With this in mind we could more or less rule out face-to-face interviews as well as phone interviews due to lack of time, funding, and manpower. Therefore, some type of questionnaire would be most appropriate for this section of our project. Whether the survey is by mail, web or email was determined after further examination.

3.3.1 Survey Format

After deciding that a questionnaire is the best method, we needed to consider things such as the length of the survey as well as the type of questions being posed to the artists. If a survey is particularly long, then nobody will want to take the time to complete it. At the same time if the survey is too short, it will not meet the needs of developers nor will it provide useful information to the city of Worcester about the needs of artists. Finally, we needed to consider how to write the questions in such a way that made the survey attractive to artists while still gathering the appropriate information. This required formulating questions that will get the artists interested in the Worcester Arts District as well as having questions that are not intimidating in any way to the surveyed population.

When considering the format of the questions we can look to Singleton who said, "a questionnaire usually yields the most reliable information when closed questions are used, when the order in which questions are answered is unimportant, and when the

questions and format are simple and straightforward." We knew that the questions had to discover the price an artist is willing to pay to live or work in the arts district, the amount of space required, whether or not someone would be willing to move to the arts district, as well as other needs that they have. The way these questions are asked often times may be unattractive to people taking the survey. Asking people for personal information tends to make them shy away from giving an accurate answer or an answer at all. An example in our case is asking people about their financial situation. If not worded properly, people may not be willing to divulge this information

3.3.2 *Past Surveys*

To determine these factors we looked at previously completed surveys of a similar nature. An aforementioned survey of Worcester artists only produced a ten percent response rate. In addition an elaborate survey was conducted with the artists in the Boston area, which also did not produce an especially high response rate. Lastly, we had contacts at the Massachusetts Cultural Council who provided us with additional completed surveys that was of use to our study. All of these surveys were an excellent place to start since they helped us to uncover the format and style that may or may not appeal most to the participants of this kind of study.

It was also useful to consider surveys of different nature that were not done on artists. This gave us an overall feel for what types of surveying methods have been most effective. From what we had seen, all the surveys conducted on artists have been mail or phone surveys. As mentioned, many other possibilities existed including email and web-based surveys. We needed to take into consideration more then just the surveys that had been done on Massachusetts's artists.

By determining where all these surveys went wrong, we hoped to give better recommendations on how to best complete an accurate survey of Worcester artists. By keeping in mind what has been discussed on survey type, survey length, question length, question type, the order in which the questions are asked, and over all layout and appearance of the survey we determined the best possible method to reach our goal.

3.3.3   Other Resources

Another consideration was what necessary resources are available to potential respondents. We realized that this limited the number of people who may have contact to a survey since not everyone has access to the Internet from home. There was obviously a tradeoff involved here: if the survey was done online, it may be quicker and eliminate the process of artists having to mail it back, but it may not reach as many people as needed. It may also create a bias if those who have Internet access are the only people who can complete it. To overcome this we considered spoke with Ernie Floyd from Pride Productions to determine if we could make his resources available to the artists. There was also the possibility that people who did not have home Internet access would have access at another public location.

To get some final input on the different types and formats that could be used to complete the survey, we brought up the possibilities when we held focus groups. By doing this we got direct input from some of the Worcester county artists who will be asked to respond to the survey in the future. We gave them different examples of questions to determine which format was most appealing to them. In these groups we also presented the different types of survey dissemination methods to find out which one

they felt they would be most willing to respond to. Finally, we gathered information on whether or not they would have Internet access available to them.

3.4   What Incentives Will Be Used?

The use of incentives was considered to increase response rate and to encourage respondents to fill out the survey to the best of their ability.   It was clear that a high response rate was the best way to reduce non-response bias, so it was better for us to find ways to get a higher response rate from our designated sample population than to increase sample size to get a higher number of responses. Previous attempts at surveys of artist communities clearly suggested that a higher response rate was needed.

Incentives commonly used to boost survey response include sweepstake or lottery entries. Incentives need not be physical items, however. Bean and Roszkowski (1995) said that salience may be used as an effective incentive in itself: "if a person attaches little interest or importance to the particular content of a survey, then it will not matter if the survey form is short; the person still is unlikely to respond." To get the artists more involved and interested in the survey, it may be possible to spread knowledge of the importance of the survey, and to provide background information prior to sending out the survey. The results of the survey or related research report could be sent to respondents on request to remove the feeling of distance or abstraction from the survey.

In such a specialized sample population, the best technique was to develop an incentive tailored to the sample – an incentive most likely to encourage Worcester artists to respond to the survey. Possibilities included a virtual gallery in combination with an E-survey, or a community arts and culture event to which the artists could be invited.

To implement an incentive into the survey distribution, the incentives most likely to encourage Worcester's artists to respond to the survey had to be determined. Additionally, it was important to take practical considerations into account. Offering incentives requires resources that may or not be available for the purposes of this survey. These resources include funds, available time, and other items that may be unique to the intended incentive. A stock of available resources was developed, as well as organizations that willing and able to provide us with additional resources.

3.4.1 Incentives Research

To gather this information, several methods were employed. Firstly, members of the Artist Advisory Group and the Arts District Task Force – which include persons in leadership positions in arts and culture organizations – provided suggestion and useful insight. Secondly, interviews were arranged of *key informants* in the arts community: prominent individuals in the community who were in a position to represent the opinions of other artists and offer useful insight on possible incentives. Finally, a series of focus groups were set up with interested members of our sample to directly question them about what incentives would encourage them to respond to a survey.

The Artist Advisory Group (AAG) is a panel of members that include prominent leaders of organizations in the arts community actively involved in the growth of the Arts District. The AAG was assembled to provide support and advice to the WCPC Arts Survey Team. The Arts District Task force is a group of individuals formed for the sole purpose of promoting the Arts District, and has organized events such as the Trashcan Project to beautify its streets. The members of these groups have experienced advice that was very useful in determining possible incentives. In addition to directly suggesting

incentives, the advisory groups provided a summary of resources available for survey

dissemination, collection, and implementation of incentives. Finally, the AAG gave

direction to the Arts Survey team, and suggested other sources of useful information.

Key informants are leaders or prominent individuals of the artist community that

other artists look up to. These individuals should have much exposure to local artists and

be knowledgeable of their needs and wants.   Key informants may include Gary Dusoe

from the Worcester Artist Group (WAG), Ruth Ann Penka, the director of

ARTSWorcester, and Ann Rainey, from the Art Well Cooperative. A list of possible

informants to interview is included in Appendix I.   These individuals may be more

directly tied to the artist community than individuals on the advisory teams, and thus in

better position to suggest good incentives. If encouraged to become involved in the

survey process, they may spread word of the survey to the artist community by word-of-

mouth. Finally, these individuals may be appealed to as a source of additional resources

for the purpose of offering incentives.

Using these techniques, the best incentive for use with the artist survey was

determined, as a function of the sample's interest and available resources. This, in turn,

will increase the survey response rate.

4. *Data Presentation and Analysis*

During the months of January and February of 2003, our team coordinated, prepared, and conducted focus groups within the city of Worcester. Some groups, both of mixed and specific discipline, were comprised of local artists contacted through the Cultural Resource Book. Others contained members of pre-existing groups that allowed us to work with them during regularly scheduled meeting times. The questions that we generated to guide these groups were tailored to address four key points regarding a successful survey: Presentation, Incentives, Follow-Ups, and Publicity. The following chapter discusses the various inputs we received regarding our four key points, and also provides some statistical representations of the data. Appendix II contains the raw notes we compiled during the focus groups. Each session was also recorded on audiocassette, and that data was utilized in preparing this chapter as well.

4.1 Presentation

When considering the presentation of a survey, two distinct attributes must be taken into account – appearance and medium(s) of distribution. The appearance of a survey is centered on its physical structure, content, and visual design. The medium of distribution focuses on the avenues through which the survey is disseminated, the population included within these avenues, and the methods utilized to recover completed surveys. Through our focus groups, we directly addressed these issues by discussing past experience with surveys and accessible mediums. The input we received is interpreted below.

4.1.1 Appearance

A common theme cited throughout our focus groups was that of excessive survey length. Four of the six groups that we worked with brought up this issue first, regarding past survey experiences. The longer a survey is, the less likely a participant will be willing to invest their time into completing it. While this insight may be obvious, it led these groups to other, more enlightening points about structure. One particular group of female, visual artists, suggested that a multiple choice survey would be the most effective design, stating that "it's better for a survey to be multiple choice and longer, than open-ended and short." Simplicity of the survey, to them, is more important than the actual length of the survey itself. While four other groups echoed this sentiment of multiple-choice questioning, the remaining two focus sessions had differing opinions. A mixed-experienced group made the case for one-on-one interviewing, as opposed to a mass-survey approach. "If my opinion is worth something, then that group owes me their time," was stated, as well as several thoughts regarding the loss of nuances in paper surveys that could only be appreciated in a face-to-face setting. The following group confirmed this to a point, by suggesting that past surveys "didn't give you a chance to personalize your thoughts." It should be noted that, while this assembly agreed with the personalized thoughts argument, they did not discredit the potential of a written survey. We will revisit this notion further into the discussion.

Regarding the survey's content, a key ingredient echoed through all six focus groups – a clear disclaimer and mission statement. A group of writers expressed the concern that many potential participants would shy away from completing a survey if they felt it was tied to fund raising that would request a monetary donation from them.

Furthermore, some may also wish to be assured that their identities will be anonymous. To sate these apprehensions, the groups suggested in several instances that a disclaimer of some sort would be appropriate. This concept was expanded upon, however, into the idea of a mission statement or even a cover letter. The goal of a mission statement, according to a mixed-discipline group, is to "make it clear that a response will benefit [the participants] directly…really let them know what it will be used for." This concept will reappear in greater length within our discussion of incentives further on. This statement will also serve the purpose of informing the participants, as well as the community, of our initiative for the arts district project. Several individuals within our focus teams expressed concern that the city's goal with this entire project was not as clear as it should be to the public. Through a comprehensive statement of purpose attached to the survey, potential participants will feel more inclined to get involved and share their opinions.

One group of mixed participants articulated another concern surrounding the content of the survey. In past experiences with surveys, they found them to be "structured in a way that it didn't always get to a point…vague." Therefore, the survey questions contained must be clearly in their constructed. Otherwise, the group suggested that many participants could misinterpret the questions and provide less-constructive feedback.

The final ingredient to appearance of the survey is that of visual design. While suggested by five of the six groups in some manner, one particular assembly clarified this concept for us. Several participants, across five of our meetings, compared previous survey efforts to SAT tests and tax forms – neither of which were terribly appealing. One

cluster of visual artists, though, articulated their views on past surveys focused on the arts community: "I remember thinking that it was graphically unattractive for an artist survey," and "the design and layout were not visually appealing at all." This insight seemed to better solidify the concept of visual design in a survey for us, as well as strengthened the inputs of the other four groups that made similar comments.

4.1.2 Medium of Distribution

Perhaps the greatest key to a successful survey is the way it is made available to the community. In the past, surveys geared towards the arts community have been disseminated through paper mailings. While the inclusion of a stamped, return envelope was a good idea, this method may not be the best choice.

One assembly, made up primarily of writers, suggested that a group setting would be most appropriate for generating a high response rate. Many local artists' groups are already established in the area and conduct regular meetings perfect for these surveys. Some examples include the Society of Professional Communicators (SPC), Worcester Artists' Group (WAG), and Worcester Artists Really Trying (WART). At meetings such as these, the participants would be given the survey by someone they already know and trust – such as the leader or head of the group. Moreover, the "group mentality" would be inspired, potentially encouraging those who would normally not participate to fill out their survey, as their friends and colleagues were. This particular focus team also suggested that, by distributing surveys in this manner, many overlooked groups would have more of a chance to express their opinions. Besides these established artists' groups, other locations for circulation were suggested, including the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester Craft Center, and EcoTarium.

The writers' focus group also suggested a web-based survey. One individual stated that "paper mailings are easily lost," while a web or email approach is less likely to disappear under a pile of bills. A survey of this nature is very accessible to writers, according to our group, as most of them "will be on their computers anyway." Furthermore, a simple email or link to a web-based survey can be distributed to many potential participants *very* quickly and easily.

Another group, of primarily visual artists, shared many of these sentiments – especially those surrounding an assembly distribution. They strongly advised that existing networks of artists would be valuable resources for the circulation of a survey. In addition, they agreed that personal contact would encourage participants to be more responsive. As an expansion of this idea, our group proposed that, should a potential contributor not want to complete a survey on the spot, the alternative of taking the survey home to work on at a more convenient time would be an excellent method of making this procedure more attractive. "Having a sheet of paper in the home" will better lead the individual to respond to it.

Interestingly, not all of the members of this focus group agreed with the paper survey approach. One individual felt very strongly towards the web or email method, stating that having a sheet of paper in *her* home would only encourage her to dispose of it. She felt that much of the community is wired with their home computers and would be much happier to click a web-link than fill out a paper form. This concept led the group to the suggestion that a multi-avenue distribution would be the ideal technique in generating the greatest response to a survey.

The other focus groups we held all shared the idea of a multi-avenue dissemination. All six groups agreed that an email or web-based method is a strong candidate, with the vast majority of today's artists being wired at home. Conversely, all six stood strongly against the concept of telephone surveys. They also concurred that any kind of physical event would be an ideal outlet for distributing a survey. Four groups specifically mentioned *Worcester Magazine* and the *Telegram & Gazette* as potential hosts to printed surveys and advertisement of web addresses for electronic surveys. The Central Mass Arts Assembly (also known as DC-FIY) was suggested as a valuable outlet for youth artists in the community, as well as the entire northeastern area. A suggestion from the musicians within our groups – typically underrepresented in surveys of this nature – was that of handing them out, in a shortened form, with CDs and flyers at local shows and other performance venues. While some felt this method might just be a waste of paper, they recommended that a small card advertising the web address of a survey be included with CDs and flyers. A sheet of paper may be discarded, while a small business card can be easily placed in a pocket or wallet.

An individual from one group made the analogy of professional baseball's All-Star voting. The most successful voting places are those that are frequented by the target voters – baseball fans. These locations would include ballparks, sports equipment shops, etc. To apply this to our goal, best locations to make surveys available to artists are those frequented by artists: supply shops, galleries, institutions, etc. Several suggestions included CC Lowell's, LB Wheaton's, The Art Well, Fitchburg and Worcester Art Museums, Worcester Craft Center, Burncoat, and local performance clubs. It was also advised that local colleges be approached, as many students in the area are studying art.

These individuals are not only an untapped population, but also the future of any potential arts district in Worcester.

The following illustration represents the distribution of most popular suggestions for survey media, as previously discussed. The percentages are based upon 34 responses collected from focus groups, interviews, etc. This data will best assist in making media recommendations for the following chapter.

Medium of Distribution
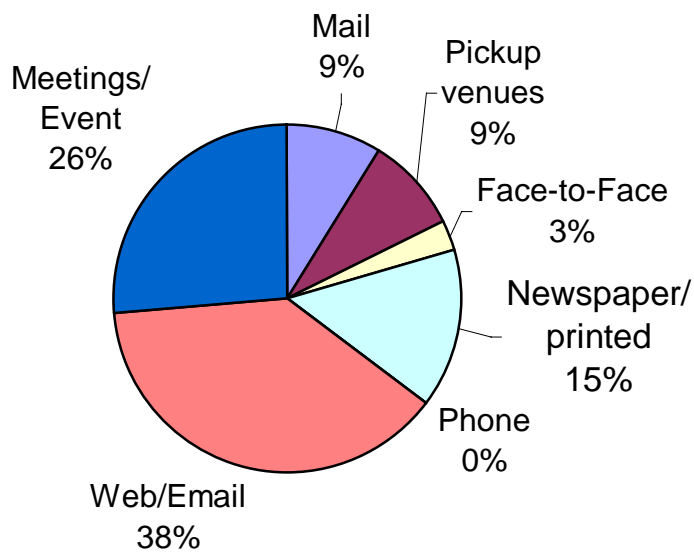
Figure 3: Percentages of most suggested media for survey distribution

4.1.3 Population Reached

Keeping with the concept of population, several of our focus groups were concerned with the scope we initially proposed – community and county artists. These are the people most likely to be living and working within the arts district, therefore, it would seem most fitting that they receive this survey. However, a focus group of writers made an insightful remark that would be echoed throughout the groups to follow: "There has to be something that's not going to just pull artists in, but going to pull people in." Moreover, the driving force of an arts district is not only the artists, but also the patrons of the district – the art lovers. Subsequent focus teams agreed that this was the brand of people that would be bringing money and business into the arts district, thus essential to its success. With this in mind, it would be critical to include their opinions, as well as those of the artists, in this survey initiative.

Several of the proposed methods of distribution, as discussed above, address the inclusion of patrons into the surveyed population. Public venues such as art museums and theater establishments (Bijou Cinema was the most common example) would be ideal for creating accessibility to the survey. Furthermore, by appropriately utilizing the channels of *Worcester Magazine* and the *Telegram & Gazette*, the scope of the survey would be extended to include every resident of the area. Finally, as suggested by a representative of DC-FIY, a web-based survey could reach a large variety of participants over an expansive geographic range. In his case, an online survey could be accessed by the entire organization, which extends from the Boston area as far south as Washington DC.

According to DC-FIY, there is also an untapped sample of artists that is regularly overlooked – youth. DC-FIY, in particular, is comprised of hundreds of artists and art supporters within the age bracket typically excluded in past survey attempts. As a representative pointed out during our focus group, many of these artists have found it difficult to afford living in others cities, most specifically Boston. He feels that, if they are contacted to participate in a Worcester arts survey, then they could be more likely to also move into the district upon its completion. This also holds true for art students as they pass through college. Worcester houses several institutions currently educating young students in the arts. This view can be expanded to Boston, as well as other local college towns. Upon graduation, many of these students will need space for work, living, or both. These are the people that would be most attracted to a new arts district in the city, and should therefore be included in the surveying process. As stated by a participant during one of our mixed-discipline sessions, "the young artists are the future of any arts district…they will give it its life."

4.1.4 Survey Recovery

The final consideration of a survey's distribution involves retrieving the completed submissions. Several possible outlets were discussed during our focus sessions, many of which depend upon the method of dissemination implemented. As stated previously, surveys conducted through mailings include a stamped return envelope allowing participants to mail their returns without cost. When applying the standard mail survey to email technology, the return envelope becomes unnecessary, as respondents can simply forward their answers back to the original sender. Similarly, data from web-based forms can be easily transferred to those conducting the study. One particular participant

expressed some background knowledge of this variety of form, and suggested that several methods of online security can be applied to ensure one submission per person only. This, he assured us, would eliminate most biases associated with multiple entries from one source.

Regarding survey distribution within pre-existing groups, our assemblies agreed that leaders or moderators of those groups could easily collect surveys and return them to the appropriate persons conducting the study. We then probed the groups for methods of collection for more open forums that were suggested, such as printed surveys in the newspapers and those stationed at various venues throughout the area. Two different ideas were most prominent in our responses: first, to simply apply the return mail method utilized in past initiatives. This would require an envelope and stamp to be included with these surveys, whether they be printed or accessible through other establishments. The second, and most popular, proposition surrounded the concept of "drop off" locations. Essentially, a variety of local establishments would serve as places for respondents to return their surveys once completed. The individual or team conducting the survey would then visit each location and retrieve the collection of submitted forms. Ideally, the same establishments that made the surveys available initially (as discussed previously) would then act as drop off points. This would provide convenience and eliminate confusion as to the appropriate way to return a survey.

4.2. Incentives

In order to encourage reluctant recipients of the survey to respond, the use of incentives should be considered. It is important, however, to consider all the advantages

and disadvantages to offering incentives, and careful thought should be invested into finding an incentive that specifically targets the survey population and is also within the limits of the available resources.

The possible incentives have been divided into three major categories: give-aways, opportunities for exposure and salience. This section discusses how the focus groups and interviews responded to each type of incentive.

4.2.1. Give-away

A give-away is the most obvious incentive to offer, and is commonly used to increase response rate in surveys. A give-away can be as simple as a free pencil, kept by the respondent upon filling out the form. This idea was suggested by two different focus groups, one building on the idea to suggest giving out paintbrushes instead of a pen or pencil, to emphasize the focus on the arts. This incentive is limited, however, in that it is useful only if the respondent is completing the survey on location. Furthermore, a customized pencil or pen, as simple as it may seem, would be an expensive incentive; it would require paying a non-local company to produce the pens.

A lottery is another form of give-away, where completing the survey allows one to enter the drawing. Three focus groups suggested that the winners receive tickets to local events or venues, such as Foothills Theatre, the Bijou Cinema, or the Worcester Art Museum *(although an interviewee maintained that the arts museum "really has no ties with the art community" (Brueck)).* Other suggestions included entries to art classes in the area, such as at the Crafts Center. A focus group pointed out that entry into a lottery would require sacrificing one's anonymity in the survey, since one would have to give contact information in order to claim the prize. Almost immediately, two solutions were

presented: the drawing entry could be on a slip of paper separate from the survey, or the prize claim could be through a randomly assigned number retained by the respondent.

Instead of giving a larger prize to a select few via a lottery, another give-away strategy could be a smaller prize given to *each* respondent. The prize is smaller, but this fact is overcome by the guarantee that by filling out this survey you do indeed receive the prize. Ideas for such smaller prizes were inevitably discounts – suggestions included Shorah's restaurant and Foothills Theater (the two of them are connected), CC Lowell (a local art supply store), Tatnuck Bookseller (a larger chain store supportive of the arts community), as well as discounts to each of the locations mentioned for lottery prizes. One focus group and one interviewee suggested using the discount location(s) as survey drop-off points for those who did not want to mail back the survey.

One focus group made an interesting point early on that a give-away – esp. a lottery – is impersonal, and makes the survey come across as commercial rather than the non-profit venture that it is.   It is important that the recipients of the arts survey are aware that the survey benefits no institution other than the artists and the community, and if a give-away is contrary to this perception, it may do more damage than good. We brought this issue up with the remainder of the focus groups, interested to see if they agreed. Two focus groups thought that a give-away would not "commercialize" the survey. Two of them agreed that it would, but argued that "…even if it does – who cares?"   The idea was that those that were going to respond would still respond, and the give-away may encourage others to respond that normally would not have.

4.2.2. *Exposure*

One of the most powerful incentives to artists in the community is an opportunity to get exposure for their artwork. Far beyond an impersonal give-away, exposure allows the artist to show his or her artwork to other artists in the area. This connects the survey directly back to the arts and to the community. Every interview and focus group showed notable enthusiasm for this idea, although several were doubtful of the practicality of such an undertaking. Many commented that if implemented, it would lend credibility to the survey, showing that time and effort – and creative thought – was being invested, and that this in itself may encourage reluctant recipients to respond.

There are two ways to link together artist exposure and the arts survey. The first is a community event where artists can display their artwork for the mere price of filling out a survey, and then view the other works on display. *The survey is handed out on location, according the suggestions indicated in the media section of this paper (q.v.)* Such an event limits the type of media that can be displayed – although it works well for artists working visual media, other artists such as actors, musicians and writers may not benefit. Past attempts at community events have shown that they take considerable time and effort and have relatively low attendance (not significant percentage of Worcester County artists), and therefore it may be necessary to tie this idea in with an existing event rather than to organize a separate one. This would require waiting until the next such event is held – a possibility is the September Street fair.

The second way to offer exposure to survey respondents is via an online virtual gallery. The survey is completed online, and upon submission the artist is allowed to upload a picture, sound file, video clip, or simple text to the virtual gallery. All recipients

of the survey are encouraged to visit the gallery, and the online survey may directly link to and show images from the gallery. This idea links directly to another IQP project by Kate Farb-Johnson, who constructed a virtual gallery for ARTSWorcester. The virtual gallery contains many of the benefits of a community event, but is far more practical to implement. It does have its own limitations, however: putting their artwork in the correct format and uploading it to the server may present technical difficulties for some people and will require the presence of some type of technical support. Furthermore, the virtual gallery already underway has encountered problems finding a host for the project. .

4.2.3. *Salience*

Surprisingly, the best response for an incentive from focus groups and interviews alike was neither for a give-away nor for exposure. Instead, when asked what would encourage them most to respond to the survey, many responded that they would respond if they "heard about it from a friend."

Perhaps this is not so surprising. Each participant in our focus groups and interviews was explained the purpose of the survey, and understood that they themselves stood to benefit by responding. In turn, they felt that if *each* recipient understood that fact, they would not need any further incentive to respond. Two individuals commented "the best incentive would be to know that I would get feedback within a certain number of days."

Bean and Roszkowski (1995) support this idea, claiming that the best incentive is to feel involved in the survey itself. In that case, the very idea that the survey will directly benefit the artist, and that something will truly come out of the survey is the best incentive for him/her to respond.

Many prominent artists in the community may at first not want to complete the survey, having filled out several others in the past with no results. If they are offered the results of the survey, however, and shown that those are the same results being given to developers and investors, they may change their minds.

The best incentive to offer, then, is a well-publicized survey that makes artists in the community aware of the same facts that were given to attendees of our focus groups and interviews.

4.3 Publicity

Prior to conducting interviews the idea of publicizing a survey had not been considered although, it proves to be an excellent idea for increasing the response rate. After the idea was presented in an interview it became a topic in the focus groups that were held. Almost everyone who attended offered positive feedback on the idea as well as some of the best ways to actually publicize a survey in Worcester. One individual said that, "people have to hear about it, see it, and then do it" meaning there has to be more then just getting the survey to make one willing to complete the survey. The ideas of local publications, television, and radio stations as well as places where flyers can be hung were presented. Word of mouth, whether through a trusted friend or an arts group in which people are involved, seemed to be the best way of publicizing a survey.

4.3.1 Printed Publications

A myriad of local publications in which artists and art lovers alike frequently get their hands on were discussed. Focus group members suggested having local journalists interview a group of students working on the project for a column in the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*. A column would let artists know who was conducting the survey

and the purpose for it as well as letting people know that the results of the survey are crucial in order to further develop the arts district. If artists get the idea that filling out the survey has a good purpose that will benefit them, there will be a greater chance of them completing it.

Focus groups most commonly mentioned the *Worcester Magazine* and the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*. Both of these are publications that most of the artists interviewed said they often read. *Worcester Magazine* is an especially good publication because it is free and more people have access to it. An article could give details on the survey and a list of places it can be obtained.

4.3.2 TV/Radio

Similarly, if the survey was advertised on a local cable station or radio station, people would understand the goals of the survey and again they would be more willing to go ahead and fill it out. Many different radio stations were suggested but the most common was a radio station, WICN. This station in particular was brought up in three focus groups. WCUW was also brought up in two different focus groups. Either of these stations may be willing to run a brief public service announcement regarding our project. This is something that could most likely be done for free and would be heard by many.

A local television station, channel 13, also came up a few times as a possible place to advertise. A writer who attended one focus group was kind enough to recommend her daughter who works for the station as a contact. There is the possibility of getting interviews on TV regarding our project or just running a short clip to inform artists of the survey. Once again this is something that could possibly be done for free and would be seen by many artists in the community.

4.3.3 Flyers

Multiple groups said that they think hanging flyers would be a good way to get the word out. One focus group made up of members of ARTXII gave us a long list of places where it would be good to hang flyers including: CC Lowell, The Worcester Art Museum, Worcester Center for Crafts, Wheaton's (a local photography store), The Bijou Cinema, Clark College, jazz clubs that are downtown, Book Lovers Gourmet, picture framing shops, The School of Performing Arts, The Above Club, Fitchburg Art Museum, Tatnuck Book sellers and local Borders stores. In addition, the members of the WART focus group also gave us an extensive list of places where flyers could be hung. Those places that were not mentioned by ARTXII are: LB Wheaton's, WAG, Clubs, Lucky Dog, The Art Well, First Night and other colleges including Worcester State. If flyers were to be hung at all these places, people would be more likely to see them. The flyers could include information on why the survey is being done as well as where someone should go to retrieve a copy, whether a hard copy or an online version.

4.3.4 Word of Mouth

Of all the forms of publicity that came up, word of mouth proved to be the one that is most enticing to artists. Just hearing about a survey from a trusted friend would be enough to make most people fill out the survey. As someone mentioned, this would also be beneficial to us since we have no budget. Publicizing the survey through word of mouth would cost us no money, but it may also not reach as many artists as we would hope to.

Hearing about the survey through an existing arts group that someone is a member of would also be an inexpensive and effective way of getting the word out about

the survey.   Members of the ARTXII focus group mentioned that WART, ARTSWorcester, and other local groups have newsletters that are sent out to all of their members. There are also many online newsletters that reach out to artists. Advertising the survey through these newsletters would be ideal because people would be hearing about the survey from an organization that they are a part of and therefore want to help out.

4.4 Follow-ups

The final thing to consider in completing a successful survey is whether or not to perform some type of follow-up which reaches those who did not complete the survey. In some cases a follow-up may come off as forceful and bothersome to those who did not want to participate, but it could also be seen as a helpful reminder to others. Hence, it is essential to determine the best way to follow-up and the appropriate number of times to do a follow up without over doing it.

4.4.1

Throughout our focus groups no individual who was entirely against the idea of some type of follow-up. In fact, a handful of people were very willing to admit that they are a somewhat 'lazy' crowd of people. One who is admittedly 'lazy' could only benefit from a follow-up to remind them that they had not returned their survey.

A focus group wisely noted that people do not remember things when they only see or hear about it one time. Hence, a follow-up would be a sure way of knowing that people have heard something about the survey after initially receiving it. The more a survey is brought to someone's attention the more likely they will be to complete it.

The focus groups also observed that it would all depend on the type of person as to whether they were "bothered" by a follow-up or not. In addition, someone mentioned that those bothered by a follow-up are most likely the same people "bothered" by taking the time to fill out the survey at all. Therefore, by doing a follow-up we are not hindering the response rate of the overall survey by much, if any.

Finally, a focus group with ARTXII mentioned that a follow-up would help someone understand that his or her opinion is very important to us. Knowing their input is vital would make artists more willing to complete the survey. All of these ideas can assure us that a follow-up would be a good way of reminding artists to fill out a survey rather then discouraging them.

4.4.2 Nature of Follow-up

When conducting a follow-up it is important to be to the point and pleasant, and not be overbearing. Some people feel follow-ups can often times be too aggressive. As long it is done in a friendly way though this matter is simple to overcome.

In terms of follow-up phone calls, one focus group said they would not mind a phone call as long as it was clear that the person calling them was involved with a familiar group such as ARTSWorcester and not just a telemarketer. Others strongly felt that a phone call would be the most bothersome form of a follow-up and said that they would much prefer an email to remind them.

4.4.3 Frequency of Follow-ups

After determining whether or not to do follow-ups, the number of times to contact each individual, and how often to contact them should be determined. This number is somewhat dependent on how long the survey will be out. The longer the survey stays out the more time there is to do follow-ups leading to a second or possibly third try at those who have yet taken the time to finish it.

If the survey were to stay out for only one or two months then most people would find one follow-up to be sufficient and any more to be aggravating. If the survey stays out longer, then it would be acceptable to do additional follow-ups. Once a person has been reminded one time, they are probably not going to do the survey with any additional reminders, so it would end up being a waste of our time as well as theirs.

5. Recommendations

At the onset of this project, a well-respected local artist warned us that in order to elicit an active response from artists in the community, we would have to "beat them over the heads." While this is certainly not an optimistic insight, it is arguably true, considering the previous success of similar initiatives. For us, this statement served not to discourage, but to motivate. The following recommendations reflect nearly four months of research, planning, interviewing, and analysis that were driven by our desire to provide a superior alternative to the suggestion we initially received. We believe that this proposal represents the views of the majority of the local arts community, and if successfully implemented, will lead the city to the information so critical to achieving its ultimate goal – a thriving arts district nestled within the heart of Worcester.

5.1 Presentation

Through the discussion in Chapter 4, the form that the survey must take is clear. Simplicity is the key to keeping participants interested and less confused by the questions; therefore, a multiple-choice approach must be utilized. Moreover, the choices must be concrete and distinguishable, leaving no room for misunderstanding. To satisfy those who wish to expound upon their answers, an open-ended comments section should be included at the end of the survey. This combination allows the voice of a participant to be heard, while still maintaining the structure necessary to collect the hard data. Considering that this is a survey targeted at artists, the visual appeal must also be handled carefully. The design of the survey must be attractive and creative to capture the respondent; otherwise, the survey will draw as much positive attention as a tax form. A clear and informative mission statement that precedes the survey is also necessary. This

section must explain the survey's purpose in some detail, so that participants will know what they are getting into. The mission statement must also act as a disclaimer to provide confidence that the survey is meant to benefit the arts community and donation requests will be neither attached to participation, nor required in the future.

Once the survey itself is designed, attention must then be focused upon its distribution. During the course of our focus research, we found that the only way to make this survey truly successful is to disseminate it through multiple avenues. This approach will reach many different groups of people that would be alienated through a single-avenue choice. The most effective multi-avenue approach incorporates electronic, event-related, and printed surveys. A web-based survey is not only easy to generate, but also convenient for retrieving data. The vast majority of artists – of all disciplines – are wired to the Internet; therefore, a simple email distribution including a link to this electronic survey would be most efficient. The heads of several local organizations, such as WAG, WART, and SPC, have the ability to forward a single email notification to all of their members quickly. This group distribution approach can also be applied to the physical meetings of these organizations. A paper version of the survey, distributed at the end of a regular meeting, will draw a response from members already in attendance. Should an individual not wish to complete the survey at that time, the group leader can offer to collect it at a later date. This provides some flexibility for the respondent, which may also make completing the survey more attractive.

The concept of an event distribution, such as the scenario described above, can also be implemented in a situation such as stART on the Street – an art festival held in Worcester. If time permits within the scope of conducting the survey, a tie-in with an arts

show or gathering will provide an instant collection of participants. Gallery openings

may also be appropriate, and ARTSWorcester is an excellent starting point for

determining possible dates and times.

The third component of this approach is a printed survey in local papers.

Worcester Magazine and the *Telegram & Gazette* are respected outlets in the city and

surrounding areas, and are equally supportive of the arts initiative in the city. By

coordinating a date with the two sources, both a printed version of the survey and the

address of the electronic form can be simultaneously presented to a vast audience. A

reader can then either visit the online survey or complete the printed copy. The

participant will then have the option of several local "drop-off" points to submit the

survey. Likely locations include CC Lowell's, Worcester Art Museum, Bijou Cinema,

and any other willing establishments that participants may frequent.

Finally, as stated in Chapter 4, the population that the survey reaches must be as

broad as possible. While many of the questions contained in the survey will be geared

towards artists in particular, some will require the input of anyone that may wish to

patron the district. By disseminating the survey through multiple avenues, future patrons

will receive the opportunity to provide their valuable input as well. They are just as

critical to an art district's success as the artists themselves are. Perhaps most critical,

though, are the future inhabitants of the district – today's art students and youth. Again, a

valuable resource in this matter is DC-FIY, which reaches artists in many segments of the

east coast. A simple electronic mailing will be best in accessing the organization and its

members. Also, the inclusion of art students attending the universities in Worcester is

essential to retrieving important data. Contacts in the arts and humanities departments of each school will assist in reaching the students via email or otherwise.

5.2 Incentives

While the obvious choice of a give-away variety of incentive will likely be effective here, the concept of salience dominated the focus discussions. Participants will feel more confident in completing the survey if they know the results will actually be used for something. The best way to illustrate the survey's purpose to the public is to make the outcomes available – ideally in the same forums as the survey was distributed. Replacing the web-based survey with the end results maintains a consistent location, providing easy access for all online respondents. *Worcester Magazine* and the *T&G* will print the results in their papers, just as they printed the initial survey. Finally, by distributing the results to the leaders of participating groups, all contributing members will be successfully reached. This method of salience has been adopted by this phase of the project, as this document will be made available to all focus group and interview participants. Maintaining the continuity of this approach will drastically increase the positive sentiment towards the survey initiative.

While salience is critical to the following phase of the project, the potential of a give-away incentive should not be overlooked. Through contacting any of the locations discussed within – Bijou Cinema and CC Lowell's are two examples – discount coupon arrangements can be made to tie into survey participation. It must be kept in mind that if anonymity is maintained through survey participation, then a separate slip should be included for an individual to sign and redeem for their coupon. This method detaches a

participant from their particular responses, while still rewarding them for their cooperation.

5.3 Publicity

To make this survey known to as many artists as possible, publicizing it would be an excellent idea. There are two inexpensive ways of doing this reach many artists are as follows. The more people who know that a survey is taking place as well as its purpose the better response rate.

First, Phase two should publicize a survey through local publications: *Worcester Magazine* and the *Telegram and Gazette.* A story on the project should be done as soon as possible so that people know what the survey is the first time they hear about it. As mentioned in previous sections, the survey as well as its results can later be published in the same publications providing a common place for survey information to be found. People will know that they can always go to one of these publications for the latest regarding the arts survey.

A survey also needs to be publicized in places that artists frequent. Chapter 4 and the appendix list places of this nature. Flyers should be hung in as many of these places as possible and other unmentioned sites. The more information for people to see the better chance there is of them filling out the survey. The flyers should include much of the same information found in the papers in a condensed form.

5.4 Follow-Ups

A follow-up is not only a good idea but it is essential to get the best response rate from a survey of the arts community. A follow up will ensure that those who did not fill out the survey are reminded to do so. It is recommended that phase two begin follow-

ups approximately three to four weeks after the initial distribution of the survey. This allows time for people to have reached one if not more of the different distributions of the survey and by this point they have probably forgotten that the survey is due back soon.

The follow-up should be done through email for those artists who have it. As mentioned above local art groups can email the members of their organization easily, therefore they can send out a friendly reminder which should be disregarded by those who have already completed the survey. The email should specify the date the survey must be collected by in order for their opinion to be included in the final results. The email should also contain the list of places where a copy of the survey can be attained, being the web address as well as locations where a printed copy can be picked up and dropped off.

For those who do not have email, a friendly phone call may be helpful. Keep in mind people who receive a phone call may not have seen or heard about the survey yet. They should be told about it and then asked if they have completed it. People should also know that the caller is working with ARTSWorcester and the city in order to keep them interested and aware that this is not a telemarketing survey. When contacting people to see if they have completed the survey, the cultural resource book is a good place to start.

5.5 Final Comments

During the first phase of this project, many viewpoints regarding the Arts District in Worcester were presented. Some were positive and hopeful, while others were cynical and less confident. Despite this difference, every individual shared an enthusiastic desire to see something great happen for the local arts community. The area is already rich with the talent, experience, and youthful fervor that can fuel this initiative. All that stands

between the city and a vibrant arts neighbor in Main South is a demonstration of action

that will provide a tangible vision to every resident and participant in the region. This

action comes through development, with this survey being the foundation for the

emerging Worcester Arts District. This project serves not only as the means to collect the

hard data required by investors and developers, but also as strong support for the Arts

District itself. Therefore, it must be constructed with care to reach the largest number of

people as possible and deliver a positive insight into the future of the community. This

document provides the tools necessary for the success of this project's next phase. From

there, the path to a revitalized downtown and effervescent arts community will be much

clearer.

Historic and Significant Buildings Map

LEGEND

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

Appendix II: Focus Group Notes

Focus Group 1
Monday January 27, 2003
City Hall Conference Room
Two writers attended.

Have you ever taken part in any type of survey in the past that has tried to reach the arts community?

Not for this project, other surveys that did not relate to the arts.
Not of any sort.

Have sent out surveys before as well as done focus groups.
They were done at the close of group meetings – at an event that they were already there for.

What is the most accessible medium to you and why? I.e.: mail, email, phone, etc.

Group meetings would give a much higher response rate.
Ask potential investors to meet and express feelings with artists.
The survey should be sent by someone they know and people should be aware of the purpose of the survey.
A group leader would encourage them to take the time to fill it out.

Thought that it may be followed by request for donation.
A disclaimer may help.

Paper surveys may get lost.

Web based may be a lot more efficient. Quick link.
Most writers have access to internet.
People would prefer that, writers will be on the computer already so it would get done.

An event would work better. They are put in a corner. Once they are there they have to give an answer. They can not just hang up or toss it aside.

Group meetings to get input would be good PR for the district.
Get the survey to a lot of different groups.
Society of Professional Communicators (SPC) meeting (Allison would allow that)
Hand them out at classes at the Art Museum and Craft Center

Hold a meeting at the EcoTarium.
Flood peoples thoughts so that they can't just brush it off.
There are people who like art but may not be artists who we should reach.
Families who have children who are interested in the arts should be included in the survey. (Burncoat)
There are arts people and then there are 'hangers on'. Art lovers' not just artists should be pulled into the district.

People think there is nothing here. This would be a great reason to stay in Worcester.

What kind of benefits could be included in this kind of survey that would peak your interest most? (Note: these are just ideas and are not definite so don't get your hopes up)

Hear about it from a trusted friend.

Shorah's Restaurant – Give tickets to Foothills with dinner.

I don't know that an incentive (that heavy of one) is necessary. It's for the city.

Free pencil/pen to fill it out.

"There has to be something that's not going to just pull artists in, but going to pull people in."

Have an event!!!
Talk to people and then give them the survey so they know more about what's going on.
If you are there to tell them to fill it out, they will fill it out.
If you have the input then you will get the output from artists.

Virtual Gallery:
        I could use a little extra exposure.
        Very good idea. Innovative.

Using coupons/gifts/lottery etc. will make it seem commercial and could possible be more damaging then good.

One of the best incentives to respond to a survey is a strong interest in the topic of the survey itself. What do you think is the best way to increase awareness of and interest in the survey?

Local radio, paper.

There is a new AM swing station. WCRM
A lot of young people listen to it.

PSA (Public Service Announcement) 15 – 30 seconds and they gets used a lot
when they support a local group. WICN

If people hear about the survey from a 'trusted other' then they would be more
likely to take the time to fill it out.

They have to hear about it, see it, and then do it.

Follow-ups:
It would all depend on the person how they react.
The people who are annoyed with a follow-up are not the ones we want any way
because they would not be interested in the arts district.

If they are truly interested they will take the time.

People don't mind being reminded. You have to see something five times before
you remember it.

Make sure they know it is not a marketing survey.

You have to use a multi-channel approach, have the survey seen and heard about.

Contacts:
Worcester Telegram and Gazette –
     Richard Ducket (does reviews and interviews)
     Chris Dumty (can mention Sybil Farson)

Focus Group 2
Tuesday January 28, 2003 2:00 pm
ARTSWorcester

Eight artists attended including a painter/jazz singer, writer/painter, photographer/poet, painter, water color artist, and 2 co founders of foothills/directors of blue pumpkin.

How would you describe the arts community in Worcester as it is today?

It's very discouraging.

What kind of improvements do you see that could be made to the current situation that would attract more attention to the community?

There needs to be better parking.

Make it more inviting so that people are not frightened to enter the area.

The area should be more welcoming.

Have you ever taken part in any type of survey in the past that has tried to reach the arts community?

What is the most accessible medium to you and why? i.e.: mail, email, phone, etc.

You have to go where the artists are.
        "When they want to make the all star team for baseball they go to the baseball park"

Web is critical but should not be the only way.

The papers might underwrite the cost of printing an insert in the paper.

Telegram and Gazette.

There should be an option of either mailing it in or dropping it off at some location.

Not through mail where they have to pay to send it back.

Contact the owners of places that people frequent to try and have a survey available there.

Follow-up:

What kind of benefits could be included in this kind of survey that would peak your interest most? (Note: these are just ideas and are not definite so don't get your hopes up)

Tickets to something.

Tickets to the bijou.

Sharas

A drawing for something.

One of the best incentives to respond to a survey is a strong interest in the topic of the survey itself. What do you think is the best way to increase awareness of and interest in the survey?

Send out flyers.

Telegram and Gazette.

Worcester Magazine.

Notes:

A younger generation just out of college are the ones who will want the live space.

Cant rely totally on local artists.

Focus Group 3
Tuesday January 29, 2003 2:00 pm
WPI Campus Center

Three members of ARTXII attended.

Have you ever taken part in any type of survey in the past that has tried to reach the arts community?

I think I took part in the Clark/Arts Worcester survey.

The survey was received in the mail. It was handed out at a meeting.

I participated in a focus group on the arts district. Susan Silverberg ran it.

Past survey was very long. You don't want it to be too long.

Check off or multiple choice. I think it's better to be multiple choice and longer then open-ended and short.

The simplicity is more important then the length.

I was compelled to answer the survey because I'm interested in the district and may live there some day.

What is the most accessible medium to you and why? i.e.: mail, email, phone, etc.

If you send it on the web people forget about it. If you have the paper in your home you will respond.

Some are the opposite and would rather have email or web.

Do email and something else. Then you get all kinds of people.

Take any group with an existing network and distribute it through them.

If there is human contact people will be more responsive.

Would rather do it at home. They can mail it back later if they don't want to do it then.

Follow-up:

Not aggressive. They will appreciate that you really want their input.

People who have already completed the survey may get a follow-up so make sure it says that if they have already responded don't bother with it.

There would not be a problem with duplicates.

Phone would be fine if I knew it was ARTSWorcester.

What kind of benefits could be included in this kind of survey that would peak your interest most? (Note: these are just ideas and are not definite so don't get your hopes up)

Giving out a gift does not seem commercial. Or it is but who cares because it's 'a gift'.

A discount for CC Lowell.

Free admission to the Art Museum.

A discount for anything would be good. Bijou, foothills.

People might fill out the survey more then once to get extra discounts.

Would give their name if it was to help get a discount.

Have to enter your name if you want to be entered in drawing on a separate piece of paper.

Virtual Gallery:
 Great idea, excellent. Connected to art. Exposure is something artists
 want.

 May be a little hard for people to do but it would still be good.

An event seems like too much to run but tying it in with an existing event would be great.

One of the best incentives to respond to a survey is a strong interest in the topic of the survey itself. What do you think is the best way to increase awareness of and interest in the survey?

ARTSWorcester news letter.

Worcester Magazine and the Telegram

WICN WCUW radio

Web newsletters.

WART minutes.

Flyers: CC Lowell, Art Museum, Craft Center, Wheaton's (photography store), Bijou, Clark, Jazz Clubs, Book Lovers Gourmet, frame shops, school of performing arts, The Above Club, Fitchburg Art Museum, Tatnuck, Boarders.

TV: Chan. 13 Isabel D'Amico

Notes:

Cover letter should say that something will come of it. Make real clear since people still are not informed about where we are in the process that business need the info so that they will be more willing to invest.

Having an online place where the results can be seen would be good.

Survey should be out for about two months.

A month dead line. Then a few more weeks to collect the rest. Two months seems too long.

Tell them in a cover letter that there is a dead line and they will work to do it by then rather then just not do it.

Contacts:
Chan. 13 - Isabel D'Amico

Focus Group 4
Tuesday January 29, 2003 7:00 pm
WPI Campus Center

Three people attended.

Have you ever taken part in any type of survey in the past that has tried to reach the arts community?

I have taken part in several surveys for the arts district. They have been face to face, phone, and internet.

Didn't feel like filling the last one out. Some of the questions didn't address the nuances that a personal meeting would facilitate.

What is the most accessible medium to you and why? i.e.: mail, email, phone, etc.

Increasingly getting away from phone
Mail can be done when you want, take your time or rush.

In terms of payoff for us it's better to have it personal or focus group style because you can get more info.

I won't answer questions unless it is face to face. If my opinion is worth something then that group owes me their time.

One to one allows you to play off each others idea and express yourself better.

It becomes facial to do surveys in the mail and it's a waste of time. There are so many and people don't have time. It has to be tied to a purpose.

Send a certain number of surveys to each neighborhood. (Include everyone)

If by mail include a self addressed envelope.

Nobody wants to walk more then 15 steps. They will make the smallest effort possible.

Follow-up:
Would be a good idea.

What kind of benefits could be included in this kind of survey that would peak your interest most? (Note: these are just ideas and are not definite so don't get your hopes up)

The best incentive would be to know that I would get feedback within a certain number of days.

We would like to know the results.

So often people fill out surveys and hear nothing about it and nothing gets done.

One of the best incentives to respond to a survey is a strong interest in the topic of the survey itself. What do you think is the best way to increase awareness of and interest in the survey?

I don't have any confidence in advertising.

Have meetings at peoples existing groups.

Notes:

If you are going to use the CRB the survey numbers will not increase much.

Survey has to have a very strong opening statement. Should let people know that if they do not do the survey then their voice will not be heard in the future. The results may not benefit them in the fashion they think it should if they don't take time to fill it out know.

Also look at what it would take to make people more active.

Follow up.

Focus Group 5
Tuesday January 30, 2003
The Bijou

Eight members of WART attended.

Have you ever taken part in any type of survey in the past that has tried to reach the arts community?

There was one about 5 years ago.

Being an art student made me want to respond.

Being a director of ARTS Worcester made me willing to fill it out.

Thought the idea was good therefore I responded.

It was extremely lengthily.

Structured in a way that it didn't always get to a point. They didn't give you a chance to personalize your thoughts.

I remember thinking that it was graphically unattractive for an artist survey.

The design and layout was not graphically appealing.

What is the most accessible medium to you and why? I.e.: mail, email, phone, etc.

Make it electronic! I would be able to send it out to people all over. In Boston and places where the rent is currently so high. It would be great for students in other places who would be most likely to move to the arts district.

Reach out to other places!
Central Mass. Arts Assembly. – DC-FIY (Don't complain – fix it yourself)

If you could click on the mouse and get it done quick then more people would be willing to do it. It will bring in young people.

Do both. There are people who still don't touch computers.

Pass them out at shows to kids with CDs and things.

I think handing out surveys would just be a waste of paper.

Hand out a business card with the web page on it. It should be graphically cool.

Have it at a whole array of events. Be a presence at many different events and groups. College fairs.

Use Worcester Magazine to publish a web address.

Compile a lot of mailing and email lists to get places to send it out to.

It would be good to reach artists out of the area in other places in mass.

Get the word out that Worcester is even looking.

Post on existing web sights.

Follow-up:

We are lazy and forget so any follow-up would be good.

Especially email.

Telephone calls stink. NOT AT ALL.

Like one or two reminders but no more then that.

Send out follow-ups till you get enough of a response and then stop.

What kind of benefits could be included in this kind of survey that would peak your interest most? (Note: these are just ideas and are not definite so don't get your hopes up)

Coupons to cultural attractions.

Discount to art classes.

CC Lowell

Just the fact of hearing the results would be a personal benefit to me.

We always hope we hear the results. Post them in the paper or on the internet.

Give out a gel pen or paint brush to fill it out.

I think an event would be good.

One of the best incentives to respond to a survey is a strong interest in the topic of the survey itself. What do you think is the best way to increase awareness of and interest in the survey?

Events would be the best place to advertise.

CC Lowell, colleges,

Make it really visible on the internet.

Wormtown, Start on the street.

Have the address listed on all the web pages.

WICN Interview Show.

WCUW

Flyers: Museum, Craft Center, LB Wheaton's, WAG, Clubs, Lucky Dog, The Art Well, Fitchburg Art Museum, First Night, Colleges (an untapped market), Worcester State.

Word of mouth!

Notes:

You have to give artists a dead line.

About 3 months.

Send out reminders online.

Make it clear that a response will benefit them directly. Really let them know what it will be used for. Make the connections so they know if they respond it is more likely that the district will actually happen.

Knowing it will go to developers will make it better.

This is to prove that there is a demand.

Pick a few cities that are feeder cities and develop a profile to reach people there. The rent is going up there and it's still low here.

The artists have to get out there and they will bring people in. Artists go where it is trendy.

Focus Group 6 (2 people, clay/furniture)
Tuesday February 6, 2003
Worcester Center for Crafts

Two artists attended including a furniture maker and someone who works with clay.

Have you ever taken part in any type of survey in the past that has tried to reach the arts community?

No.
Yes. One at the Worcester street festival last fall.
Handed out at the end to find out how the festival was.

Fairly short.

Seems like Worcester is behind the ball with getting this arts district underway.

What is the most accessible medium to you and why? i.e.: mail, email, phone, etc.

Mail.

At a group would be good. It would be nice to do both. (mail/event)

Openings at galleries.

Ralph's and Vincent's bars where artists go often.

Not a phone call.

A phone call doesn't give you time to think.

I don't want to be thinking about it in front of a computer.

I would want to go to an event.

No problem with filling it out on the spot.

Depending on the length I would want to do it on my own time.

The option of taking it home would be good.

I would be less inclined to do it if there was no return postage.

Drop offs:
    The Well (Harlow street near WAG)
    The Craft Center

What kind of benefits could be included in this kind of survey that would peak your interest most? (Note: these are just ideas and are not definite so don't get you hopes up)

My first thought is we are trying to help the artist, so why wouldn't they want to do it.

Just being aware of what we are trying to do should be enough.

The belief in the arts district is low.

I wouldn't need a push to fill it out.

Virtual Gallery:
    Yeah, there are some already that are no charge but it couldn't hurt.

One of the best incentives to respond to a survey is a strong interest in the topic of the survey itself. What do you think is the best way to increase awareness of and interest in the survey?

Article in Worcester Magazine.

It's free and widely read.

Make it decent size though.

Don't read the telegram.

Flyers

Advertise through local groups. They usually get a good word out.

Word of mouth!!!

Appendix III: Key Informant Interview Notes

Laura J. Menides
lmenides@wpi.edu
508-831-5513
        -5385
        -5246
Office: SL 237

Background info: Worcester County Poetry Association
                         Professor of HU/Arts at WPI
Interview Notes:

        Worcester County Poetry Association
                Aims to help local poet
                Brings in international poets
                "Worcester has become a hot bed for poetry"
                Meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7pm in the Performing Arts School of Worcester.

Poets are supportive of the arts district

Was not sure if past survey contacted enough poets and writers. Thought it may have focused a lot on the visual arts and not enough on all disciplines.

Media:
- Everyone seems to have access to email/web
- WCPA does all their announcements through email

Incentives:
- Arts Worcester could buy a large block of tickets to the Foothill Theater to give to those who fill out a survey.
- Give $5 of at Tatnuck bookseller. Contact Gloria or Larry Abromoff

Laura's Recommendations

- Contact the WCCA (Worcester's local access TV) for publicity and possible interview. Tracy Folly or Georgia Menides (Laura's daughter)
- Georgia Menides is also a film maker in Worcester who would be interested in living in the Arts District – possible interviewee
- Performing Arts School of Worcester
- Contact people at Worcester Magazine for publicity. Possibly advertise the survey.

Contacts:
- Francine D'Allesandro – President of the WCPA. Francine@postmark.net or .com ?
- Leon Nigrash – Reviews art shows for Worcester Magazine. Was the head of WOW (Writers of Worcester).
- Jody Pico - writer
- Michael True – writer, former WCPA member
- Ann Marie Shea – Drama Teacher at Worcester State – nashea@worcester.edu – 508-929-8538
- Susan and Marc Smith – Former producer at Foothills Theater. (Attended a focus group). May have a list of artists.

*Mention Professor Menides to any of these contacts if needed.

Lora Brueck
lbrueck@wpi.edu
508-831-6039

Background info: Visual Artist
           Teaches hand coloring/book making
           Employed at Gordon Library

Interview Notes:

What does she think/know about the planned arts district?
-likes the idea but not the location
      -because it's already an established community
      -they do not have good structures there
           -industrial/factory areas would be better for an arts district

Feelings on past surveys:
      -too long
      -only people who want to live there or have some connection with the arts district would actually fill out the survey

Incentives:
      -gallery: good
      -event: this could involve too many people because people would have to display their art and still others would have to come just to see the show

Media:
      -email or web would be the best. A good number of people do have access to email
      -there is already lots of art online so people are familiar with the web
      -phone or mail reminders would be useful

Other thoughts:
- The art museum really have no ties with the art community

Stephen Knapp
sk@stephenknapp.com/www.stephenknapp.com
508-757-2507
Studio number: 508-831-0390

Background info: Visual arts
                         Built the library doors
                         Connected with 'Grounds for Sculpture' based in NJ

Recommends Kathleen Camarata, Jason Ram, Ann Remi (works with 12 women artists)

"Beat them over the head!"

Appendix IV: Focus Group Questions

Worcester Artist Focus Groups

How would you describe the arts community in Worcester as it is today?

In your experience, does this account reflect the general opinion of other artists in the community?

Are you familiar with the initiative to create a new arts district in the Main South area of Worcester?

What kind of improvements do you see that could be made to the current situation that would attract more attention to the community?

In your experience, does it seem that outsiders are aware of the community as it is?

Have you ever taken part in any type of survey in the past that has tried to reach the arts community?

Was the survey easy to complete?

Were the questions clear?

What was the medium of the survey?

How long did the survey take to complete? Was this too long/too short?

Did you feel compelled to participate in the survey?

In what ways could this be improved upon?

What is the most accessible medium to you and why? I.e.: mail, email, phone, etc.

Do you have access to the internet?

Would you be willing to travel to an event or internet café to complete a survey? How far?

Would you be more inclined to fill something out on your own time?

Do you think a reminder would encourage you to respond or turn you off from filling out a survey? If so what type? Phone, email, etc?

What kind of benefits could be included in this kind of survey that would peak your interest most? (Note: these are just ideas and are not definite so don't get your hopes up)

Would you be interested in displaying your art in an online gallery or some type of public display? How likely would you be to attend?

Is there some type of lottery/raffle that could be offered that would make you more willing to take part?

Would a discount or coupon attached to you filling out the survey interest you?

One of the best incentives to respond to a survey is a strong interest in the topic of the survey itself. What do you think is the best way to increase awareness of and interest in the survey?

Flyers, TV, Radio, Email, Phone, Mail, Publications, etc.

Note: Do you listen/watch to local channels?

Would similar ideas be effective in publicizing the arts district itself?

Are there any other comments or ideas you would like to share with us today?

Thank you for your time. The information you have provided will be of great help to us and the city of Worcester.

We will be posting an executive summary of our final proposal for this project online. If you are interested in finding out what we determine from these focus groups please let us know the email address that you are currently using and we will send you a link to the page within a few weeks.

Appendix V: Interview Questions

What is your role in the Worcester arts community?
      Are you involved in any art groups?

Would you please briefly describe the arts community today?
      In your experience, does this account reflect the general opinion of other
      artists in the community?

What is your knowledge of the initiative for the arts district in Worcester?
      What type of improvements do you think could be made?

What methods do you feel would be most effective in our mission?
      How can we improve on the response rate of the survey?
      What incentives do you think would be good to offer your colleagues?

Appendix VI: Members of the Arts District Task Force

First	Last	email	Phone
Maryon	Attwood	mattwood@worcestercraftcenter.org	753-8183 x3002
Lisa	Barthelson	labart5@aol.com	886-2394
Tom Lewis	Borberly	None	757-4293
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Richard	MacPherson	Rmacpherson@ymcaworcester.ortg	755-6101 x223
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Miguel	Rivera	mrivera.wcg@verizon.net	508-754-0908; f 508-754-8771
Susan	Stoops	susanstoops@worcesterart.org	799-4406
Polly	Traina	ptraina@attglobal.net	752-5109
Frank	Zitomersky	none	508-756-4073; f 756-0198 cell 508-414-2411

Artist Survey Contact List

- Susan Hartnett, BRA
- Meri Jenkins, MCC 617-727-3668; meri.jenkins@art.state.ma.us
- Steve Teasedale, Exec. Director, Main South CDC, 508-752-6181; adwes@aol.com
- Frank Zitomersky, 508-756-4073
- Susan Stoops, Curator of contemporary art, Worcester Art Museum, 799-4406; susanstoops@worcesterart.org
- Ruth Penka, Director, ARTSWorcester, 755-5142 (she will most likely have some other suggestions for you to speak with)
- Ann McTigue, ARTSWorcester (musician/arts administrator), 755-5142
- Highland Artist Group, Donna Vayo, Founder, cell 508-527-7306 or Tom Friend, Managing Director, 978-464-5171; cell 508-797-7685
- Art Well Cooperative, Ann Rainey or Jason Ram, Jason's work # is 799-4406 (Art Museum)
- Leslie Courtney, Owner/Pres, Bijou Cinema, 508-757-5311
- Francine D'Allessandro (sp?), francine@postmark.net
- Dolly Vazquez, Program Director, Center for Latino Arts & Culture, 508-798-1900 x220; dollyvaz@hotmail.com (she runs the Latino Festival every year on the common that draws approx. 40,000 people from the region)
- Joyce Kressler, Exec. Director, First Night Worcester, 799-4909
- Maria Florez, Bohemian Latin Stand, poet, 508-987-0045; mariaflorezz@hotmail.com (yes, there are 2 "z"s)
- Dan Harwell, Director, Localpalooza, 3-D entertainment, (# in phone book?)
- Worcester Artist Group, Gary Dusoe
- Gloria Hall, Henry Lee Willis Community Center, organizes the African American Festival, 508-799-0702
- Patty Clarkson, Worcester Cultural Commission, 799-1400
- Bill Cavanaugh, Owner, CC Lowell, 757-7713

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