



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***TOWN OF FRANKLIN APPLIES FOR CULTURAL DISTRICT STATUS TO  
THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS***

Franklin, MA (June 15, 2018): Thanks to a multi-year effort by the Town of Franklin and a group of its citizens, an official application to establish a Franklin Cultural District was submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the offices of the Massachusetts Cultural Council on June 8, 2018. The Franklin Cultural District (FCD) will be a demarcated region within the town that encompasses the cultural facilities, activities, and assets that lie in a compact, walkable area. Franklin's vibrant cultural atmosphere is already home to the nation's first public library, the Franklin Historical Museum, Dean College School of the Arts, over 25 other performing and visual arts and dance studios, and a variety of restaurants and cafes. Establishment of the FCD will likely attract additional arts and cultural organizations in the future, driving economic development.

Cultural District status will make the FCD eligible for a variety of state grant programs, state economic development opportunities and monies, strategic planning and historic preservation assistance, and marketing through the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism.

"Arts and Culture have become an extremely important and vibrant economic engine for the Town of Franklin," says Deputy Town Administrator Jamie Hellen. "Designating the Town as an official Cultural District will only enhance those opportunities and establish Franklin as the premier arts and cultural hub in the southern MetroWest region."

This effort has been years in the planning, beginning with the Franklin Cultural District Steering Committee, who were tasked with gauging interest in the project and starting the organizational efforts necessary to begin the application process. The Steering Committee met with potential partners, the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), and Town of Franklin administrators to determine the needs, geographic area and types of businesses to be included, and the roles and responsibilities of the District itself. That Committee went on to create the Franklin Cultural Festival, which ran for three years and created a strong basis amongst the partners and evidence for the State of the vigor of the arts and culture community in Franklin. A preliminary site visit with the MCC and the Town resulted in a decision to move forward with the formal cultural district application.

On June 28, 2017, the Franklin Town Council passed Resolution 17-45, which endorsed the FCD's cultural district goals, namely to "attract artists and cultural enterprises; encourage business and job development; establish the district as a tourist destination; preserve and reuse historic buildings; enhance property values; and foster local cultural development."

In November 2017, seven Franklin residents were appointed to the Franklin Cultural District Committee, an official Town committee which took over for the initial Steering Committee, to make the formal application to the State and then oversee the new district. Part of the application included letters of endorsement and intent from the many cultural assets in town, establishing them as official partners of the District, including the Franklin Public Schools, Dean College, Franklin Downtown Partnership, the Franklin School for the Performing Arts, Franklin Performing Arts Company/THE BLACK BOX, the Franklin Historical Museum, the Franklin Art Association, the Franklin Cultural Council, and many more. Some of the partners were involved in the FCD initiative from the very beginning, others, such as Drummer's Studio, Encore Music Academy and Feet in Motion School of Dance, have signed on more recently as the momentum for establishment of the District increased.

During the first quarter of 2018, the Franklin Cultural District's Goals were refined during Cultural District Committee public meetings. These Goals combine the aims for the State's cultural districts, existing planning initiatives (including Franklin's 2013 Master Plan cultural resources goals and objectives), and input from Committee partners. The FCD partners will meet with the Committee quarterly, starting June 19, to discuss marketing, cross-promotional events between the partners, and ways to enhance the District. An FCD website, complete with a local arts calendar, is being established to provide a single source of arts and cultural information for town residents and visitors.

The application filed on June 8, 2018, included narrative on the FCD's goals, marketing plans, partners, cultural assets, and State-required metrics to measure the FCD's impact, as well as the official FCD map. In addition, hundreds of pages of supplemental materials were submitted showing examples of arts and cultural events and programming within the proposed District. Once the MCC has reviewed the application, a site visit will be scheduled with the Town, the FCD committee and the FCD partners. Only then will the State render a verdict on the application.

To learn more about the Franklin Cultural District, their partners, and upcoming activities and events, visit their website at [www.franklinculturaldistrict.org](http://www.franklinculturaldistrict.org), or follow them on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/FranklinCultureMA](https://www.facebook.com/FranklinCultureMA)), Twitter (@FranklinCulture), and Instagram (@franklinculture).

###