



ZONE3

GSP

# ZONE 3 LEARNINGS, BEST PRACTICES + PARTNER INTEGRATION

A GUIDE FOR ONGOING + EXPANDED NEIGHBORHOOD  
ACTIVATION ALONG WESTERN AVE IN LOWER ALLSTON

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# INTRO / HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

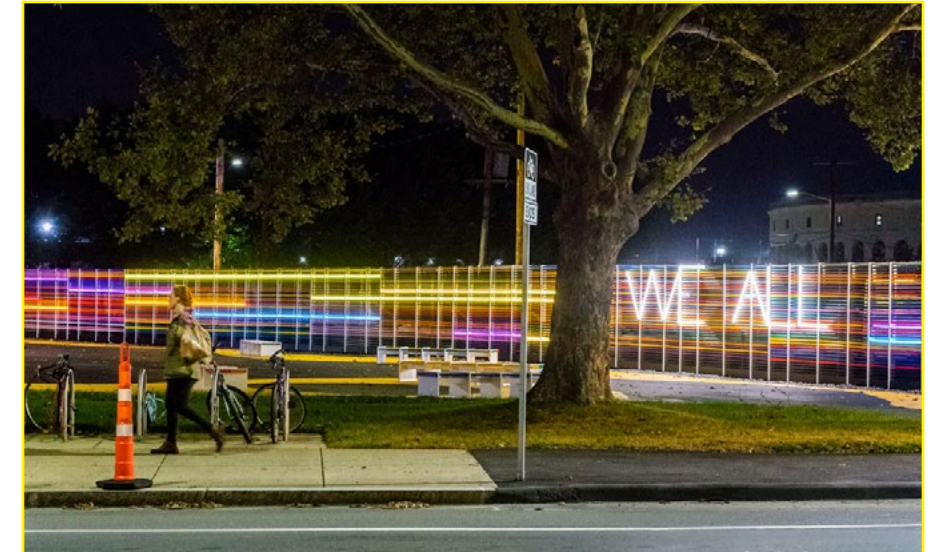
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## INTRODUCTION

Walk or bike down Western Ave today, and the buzzing energy of a neighborhood in transition is inescapable: Harvard students and faculty make their way into the gleaming new Science and Engineering Complex; shoppers flow in and out of the Trader Joes at the Continuum Building; and the first signs of life (and a soon to open cafe) are visible at 210 North Harvard Street. Down the street, the decades-long effort to refurbish and revive the historic Charles River Speedway property has led to a thriving hive of micro retail activity that hosts throngs of community members each day at the western extent of this corridor. At the other end of Western Ave, construction crews prepare to break ground on the transformative first phase of the Enterprise Research Campus and the next phase of the Allston Greenway. In between, a network of bold public art murals have beautified formerly nondescript building facades.

While some retailers closed during COVID, businesses like Pavement Coffee and Perillas persevered and continue to operate bustling businesses; and today, a couple of female entrepreneurs are pressing forward with final plans to open their own new restaurants and cafes in Barry's Corner. That work, combined with active development sites for new housing, lab, and office projects, means Western Ave is busy with construction workers every day. More activity in Barry's Corner is now coming from the redesigned and refurbished Smith Field where kids and families play, and rec league games run long into summer nights. Across the street, the Harvard Ed Portal and the Ceramics Studio continue to serve as vital community assets, resources, and anchors eight years after opening their new buildings.

And of course, at the small cluster of buildings at 267 Western Ave a range of creative partners gather to host community programs and events, and Aeronaut Brewing Company is welcoming neighbors and visitors alike for another night of live music, cold beer, and yes, dogs, at the beloved



*In 2016, Zone 3 and the Harvard Graduate School of Design collaborated on a student design-build competition for an installation inspired by community insight into how neighbors used the The Grove green space. The winning design entitled 'WE ALL' became an iconic piece of public art and a welcoming beacon of color and light in Barry's Corner through 2022.*

Aeronaut Allston beer garden. It's here at Zone 3's hub of activity where you can find the original seeds of a Harvard-sparked strategy to further activate and energize the Western Ave corridor with creative programming, public art, and retail experiments that helped catalyze the broader investment and activity in Lower Allston over the past decade.

With so much activity, investment and creative energy flowing down Western Ave, it's hard to think that some of the biggest developments are just on the horizon. With that in mind, it is critical for current and future neighborhood stakeholders to look back at the strategies and plans that helped transform Western Ave into one of the most vibrant creative corridors in Boston, which is the purpose of this document. This Guide will share best practices for neighborhood activation with Harvard's partners and collaborators in an effort to maintain momentum in the years ahead. The potential for deeper knowledge sharing and collaboration in this arena is significant.



ZONE 3 BACKGROUND  
+ NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

In February of 2015 Harvard’s then-Executive Vice President Katie Lapp convened a small group of internal and external parties to develop a creative strategy for activating underutilized Harvard Real Estate (“HRE”) properties along the Western Ave corridor in Allston, MA in advance of planned academic and private development in the area. The goal was to plant the seeds for the vibrant commercial corridor that the community had been striving for and that the University knew would help draw students, faculty, and staff across the river to the new Allston campus. Harvard did not take a traditional approach to achieve this goal. Instead, the University and its external partners, GraffitoSP and veteran real estate executive Gayle Farris, sought to take proactive yet organic steps to populating Western Ave with the types of creative, fun, and functional amenities and resources that would help make Allston a destination and center of activity long before the introduction of the large scale commercial development we’re seeing today.

At the start of this work Graffito worked with the EVP office and HRE to identify those underutilized commercial properties that could best serve as canvases for new and creative temporary programs, events, and other public-facing activations. The cluster of one-storey buildings at 267 Western Ave quickly came into focus as an ideal canvas. The team was attracted to the variety of building types, including a wide open former retail space, messy garage space, and (almost) ready-to-use office space. The large adjacent parking lot offered outdoor event space; and its immediate proximity to Smith Field, Barry’s Corner, and the Harvard Ed Portal and Harvard Ceramics Studio connected the site to the heart of the current and future neighborhood. This property was shown on a map with seven other HRE property zones along Western Ave. These then-vacant buildings at 267 Western Ave were labeled on the map as “Zone 3.” The name was used as a shorthand reference from the start.

Fulfilling the activation goals set back in 2015 required a commitment to experimentation and learning, which are core to the University’s mission across Allston. Over the past eight years Graffito and Harvard have leaned into these values to develop a unique ground floor planning and place-activation strategy under the umbrella of the Zone 3 initiative in Allston. In parallel to these pursuits other impactful work by Harvard partners was taking place in the neighborhood. This included work to develop and define urban design requirements and recommendations, culminating in

the “Allston Greenway Handbook” drafted by Reed Hilderbrand in 2023 for HUPAD Urban District Initiatives. All of this work has been layered on to and is additive to the existing cultural and community infrastructure provided by the Harvard Ed Portal, which opened to the public in 2008.

From the start, the Zone 3 strategy shied away from more traditional retail leasing approaches that prioritize 5-10 year lease agreements. Instead, the team focused on short- and medium-term activation tactics to facilitate a dynamic and ever-changing landscape of programs. The goal was to create an accessible platform for new and emerging creative partners, and provide opportunities to test, learn, and re-tool a variety of approaches and practices without long-term commitments. This novel strategy was also a direct response to an important reality of the “retail readiness” (further detailed later in this section) of the Western Ave corridor in 2015.

These temporary and short-term programs, events, and in limited cases, retail pop-ups and experiments allowed the team to fill spaces with activity, energy, expose creative operators to the future potential of neighborhood, and get the public into a stronger habit of coming to and experiencing Western Ave as a destination before more robust retail development took root.

This ability to test and learn has been critical to the Zone 3 initiative’s success. The Western Ave corridor has experienced considerable change and growth in the past eight years: development projects have brought new residents, retailers, offices, labs, and classrooms to the neighborhood. Yet even with more development on its way, this remains a neighborhood in transition. In this context, Zone 3’s ability to respond to changing neighborhood patterns and community needs and interests has allowed it to evolve over time to deliver programming that is consistently valued by the community and is additive to the neighborhood public realm. Flexibility and responsiveness are key to successful neighborhood activation work and are the result of making experimentation and learning core values of the work.

Today, as this work enters its ninth year, we are excited to share this overview of Zone 3’s impact, key successes and challenges, and lessons the team has learned in an effort to inform future place activation work by other partners across Allston.

PURPOSE + ASPIRATIONS

This document details key learnings, takeaways and best practices for activating and energizing underutilized spaces throughout the Western Avenue corridor in Allston, MA. For nearly a decade Graffito SP has worked in close collaboration with Harvard Allston Initiatives (now Harvard University Planning and Design), Harvard Real Estate, and other University partners in Lower Allston to execute a vision for a more dynamic, active, and connected Western Avenue by leveraging a diverse array of Harvard properties and spaces to bring the Allston and University communities together around food, retail pop-ups, music, art, and expressive cultural programs and event.

The Zone 3 initiative has been the umbrella under which these efforts have taken shape – a common facilitator, curator, organizer, and promoter. Its success is thanks to strong external collaborators, namely Isenberg Projects, and invaluable internal stakeholders and partners including HPAC, the Ed Portal, Art Lab, SEAS, HBS and Common Spaces. This Guide draws on nine years of work planning and executing Zone 3 place activation programs and aims to present critical insights and guidance to a range of Harvard and non-Harvard actors working on real estate development, urban design, retail leasing, and public programming/activation in Lower Allston.

Another key piece of this Guide is a detailed overview of successful Zone 3 public art programs along with process and execution notes compiled by our partners at Isenberg Projects for popular efforts like the Walls on Western mural program and Art Scrim initiative. The goal is to inspire key partners to tackle similar efforts elsewhere in Allston and offer more visibility into the proven process Zone 3 has developed to efficiently and effectively make those programs happen – specifically to make this work more accessible and replicable. These programs are highly scalable and this Guide aims to offer a roadmap for making more high impact installations possible. Elsewhere in this Guide we have detailed key challenges to activation work in Allston, from permitting and licensing to partner selection and marketing. There are also sections dedicated to data tracking, impact evaluation, and strategies for translating in-person programming to the digital domain.

Executing public events, public art installations, short-term retail residences, and other such programs can help draw more people to the neighborhood, connect different communities, highlight the many virtues of Allston, and provide a vital platform for experimentation for artists and small businesses. As the Western Ave corridor and Lower Allston neighborhood more broadly continue to evolve and grow, we invite partners to leverage these program models and the Zone 3 team’s experience to expand this activation work together.





FOUR FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVATION PRINCIPLES

Four ideas have been foundational to the overall planning, execution, and success of the Zone 3 team’s activation efforts in Allston: Digital Placemaking, Facilitating Collaborations, Demystifying Transactions, and Retail Readiness. These principles were not necessarily ideas that the team foresaw at the start of this work in 2015, but have become critical to grounding work in the realities of the broader neighborhood and development context; emerged as new approaches to placemaking in the contemporary landscape; evolved into critical tools and pathways to operational success; and became essential to neighborhood scale impact and success.

DIGITAL PLACEMAKING

Early in the development of the Zone 3 initiative it became clear that relying on hanging posters and fliers across the neighborhood or emailing event info to static neighborhood listservs was not sufficient to fully promote activation programs to the widest and most diverse audience possible. Zone 3 needed a visual brand, a website, and a presence on social media. This digital footprint was needed for marketing and promotional purposes; it was also essential to be able to tell the story of the what, who, and why of Zone 3’s efforts in Allston. It has since proven to be a powerful tool for connecting with the Zone 3 community and expanding the reach and impact of activation programs held in-person and online.

Call it “digital placemaking.” It was a new way to further the goals and increase visibility of this place-based Initiative. Digital storytelling platforms amplify the work of local artists and help connect them with a community of folks who appreciate and benefit from interacting with their work in the community. Through the use of our social channels we also expand our audience’s knowledge of other neighborhood businesses and happenings. The value of our channel goes far beyond posting aesthetically pleasing photos or announcing dates and times of events; it deepens the relationship between people and place by highlighting the very best of the Lower Allston community. It also allowed Zone 3 to weather the depths of the pandemic – and stay relevant – by having an existing platform to leverage virtual programming. This included:

- Shifting the popular Drinking and Drawing series to an online Zoom program
- Developing the Skillbuild community learning series, a “web-first” collection of videos available on-demand on Zone 3’s website that

featured local neighborhood businesses and community partners teaching a unique skill, hobby, or other educational lesson. Videos included bike repair lessons with Commonwheels Bike Co-op, denim repair with Vivant Vintage, and house plant care tips with staff from Mahoney’s, among others

- Launching the Zone 3 Mixtape Project, a weekly Spotify playlist release curated by community partners to help folks stay connected in challenging times with common music

FACILITATING COLLABORATIONS

As is discussed throughout this Guide, the Zone 3 team hopes that the transparency of this information encourages stronger collaboration and coordination across programs and between various Harvard and non-Harvard partners. While those who are involved in planning, programming, and development work in the neighborhood likely know the discrete borders, various parcels and boundaries of distinct ownership, 99% of the public doesn’t; frankly they don’t really care. This means that few people know which partner or developer is responsible for which mural or community event. This reality creates the opportunity and incentive for greater cross-partner and cross-site collaboration to ensure that every public activation initiative is great, because successes and failures will have impact beyond property lines. Put another way, you never know what you’ll be given credit for - or what you’ll be blamed for - so we should all be working together to amplify our efforts, minimize duplication, and facilitate more scale and impact.

DEMYSTIFYING TRANSACTIONS

Demystifying the transactional piece of activation programs has helped to demonstrate that it is possible for large, complex organizations like Harvard University to work closely and supportively with new and emerging artists and creative entrepreneurs who do not necessarily have prior experience or the resources to engage in lengthy contract negotiations. Graffito has found that in many cases landlords who want to engage in activation work with the creative community require a time consuming and onerous transactional process as a result of unnecessary layers of process, people, and paperwork. Furthermore, Landlords too often take an extractive approach to engaging with artists, which penalizes inexperience and is coupled with reduced compensation and overly parental restrictions. Thanks to the eagerness of HUPAD, HRE, Office of General Counsel, and other internal Harvard partners, Zone 3 has been able to refine a set of standardized transactional documents and processes that meet Harvard’s needs but are still approachable to the types of operators we are most excited to work with. Zone 3’s approach shows there is a middle path that is transparent, simple, quick, and helps protect both the Landlord’s and partner’s interests.

RETAIL READINESS

While the work of most activation programming takes place on the ground floor of new developments and oftentimes within vacant retail spaces, Graffito holds firm that not all retail space should or can support traditional leases with retail or restaurant operators. Especially in still-emerging development districts, partners and developers must consider population densities, daytime foot traffic, and other factors to determine if a ground floor space – or a new development in general – can realistically support additional retail businesses. Are there enough potential paying customers day-to-day to allow a new rent-paying business to succeed? In 2015 when Graffito began work with Harvard in Allston, the answer to this question relative to many HRE properties in and around Barry’s Corner was definitely “no.” That helped the team immediately shift away from potential retail leasing strategies and instead focus on non-retail, temporary programming and public art as a way to bring new energy, activity, and visibility to the corridor.

Two specific and high profile Zone 3 partnerships serve as helpful illustrations of the team’s thinking about retail readiness:



1) PRX PODCAST GARAGE

In August 2016, Zone 3 collaborated with leading digital media organization PRX to open the PRX Podcast Garage in one of three buildings at 267 Western Ave. The Garage is a groundbreaking podcast recording studio and community space for audio storytelling classes, workshops, and events that is open to the public. When it launched, the Podcast Garage was the first of its kind anywhere in the country.

While PRX occupies its space via a lease agreement, it has been a unique arrangement that was premised on the podcast network utilizing the physical space for a range of rotating programs, events, and workshops that aligned with the activation programming and events focus of Zone 3. The lease itself began as a one year term with a three-year extension option, very short for the commercial real estate market. The deal was structured this way to give PRX a year to prove out viability, raise money, and justify a longer lease term. Rent began below market but ramped up after the first lease year.

See Next Page For 2nd Example —————>





## 2) AERONAUT ALLSTON BEER GARDEN

Also kicking off in the summer of 2016 was the Aeronaut Allston beer garden series, hosted by Aeronaut Brewing Co. Aeronaut Allston runs three days a week May to September and is the longest running and most popular program of Zone 3. It is an anchor program, a neighborhood destination, and its opening is a community-wide marker of summer. Zone 3 and Aeronaut aimed to create a welcoming community gathering place in Allston for neighbors and visitors alike. Starting out with a scrappy DIY spirit in the parking lot of 267 Western Ave, Aeronaut Allston was the first pop-up beer garden in all of Boston. It has quickly become a popular destination on summer evenings to enjoy cold beer, bites from local food trucks, and to listen to great live local music. Since its launch, Aeronaut Allston has showcased over 850 musicians on its stage and regularly welcomes several hundred people per night.

Before launching the beer garden, the Zone 3 team observed that there was a limited selection of restaurants and bars in the neighborhood and among those few, fewer showcased music and art and none were family friendly. The Zone 3 team also knew that opening a new restaurant business to fill the gap would be extremely cost intensive and risky given the still low levels of retail customer foot traffic in the neighborhood at the time. So, to test the hypothesis of what was missing, the team decided to launch a seasonal food and beer event series. One day a week, set up in a parking lot, utilizing temporary one-day liquor licenses. It was an instant success, drawing long time residents, families with kids and dogs, first dates, and local music aficionados. Since those humble parking lot beginnings, Aeronaut Allston has expanded to three nights.

Reflecting the immediate success of the program's launch in the parking lot, Harvard made a considerable investment in 2017 to completely renovate a vacant lot adjacent to 267 Western Ave into a specially designed space for

outdoor events and programs that would become the beloved "Side Yard" space that Aeronaut has made it's primary Zone 3 home. The space improvements enabled Aeronaut to expand its event attendance capacity, host special events, and attract more prominent musical acts. Harvard's investment in dedicated and quality space for the beer garden have helped it thrive as a community event and allowed Aeronaut to drive greater revenue from the series.

And even with all of its success, Aeronaut and Harvard have maintained the same transactional structure since the beginning: a straight license agreement for use of the space on a temporary, seasonal basis, and a programming subsidy from Zone 3 to support Aeronaut's music curation budget. For now, this temporary arrangement remains the best way for Aeronaut to operate in Allston and for Harvard to contribute more community gathering spaces, local music curation, and food + beverage options to the neighborhood.



# ZONE 3 IMPACT + LEARNINGS

- Zone 3 Impact + Successes
- Challenges + Learnings



ZONE 3 IMPACT + SUCCESSES

The “Harvard-sparked” Zone 3 initiative has become among the central driving forces behind the Western Ave corridor’s transformation from “pass through” to true destination and center of activity in Boston’s cultural landscape and creative economy. Zone 3’s impact and successes can be illustrated in many ways, both qualitative and quantitative. The hub of Zone 3 activity at 267 Western Ave has developed into something more than simply a space where events happen. It has become a meaningful space for community gathering and a critical piece of Lower Allston’s social infrastructure.

We know that by talking to the neighbors who mark the start and close of summer by the opening and closing of Aeronaut Allston; or from seeing the “every week” regulars return to each Drinking & Drawing with new friends in tow, and eavesdropping on the surprising number of first and second dates that come to create art over beers. Jessie + Katey’s “Allumination” art house has become a geographic landmark and directional tool, and the PRX Podcast Garage’s first of its kind space put Allston on the map for some of podcasting’s biggest names and their millions of listeners.

Some of the stories, anecdotes, and texture that illustrate Zone 3’s success since 2015 can also be found in a sample of the press and media coverage Zone 3 and its partners have received over the years:

<b>5 things to do this weekend, including Aeronaut Allston</b> WBUR, MAY 25, 2023	<b>Muralist gives Allston-Brighton a big reminder: ‘Nature is still out there’</b> THE BOSTON GLOBE, 2020	<b>Jessie + Katey turn an unused boston building into a vibrant art landmark</b> DESIGNBOOM, 2017	<b>Art in Print: Allston Zone 3 Initiative Supports Local Artists Through Poster Sale</b> THE HARVARD CRIMSON, 2022	<b>In Photos: Art Springs to Life on Allston’s Western Ave</b> THE HARVARD CRIMSON, 2023
<b>Artists Give Allston House Western Exposure</b> THE BOSTON GLOBE, 2017	<b>“Evo” Mural Creates Vibrant Visual Masterpiece on Western Ave</b> BC HEIGHTS, 2017	<b>In Allston, a glimpse of podcast nation</b> THE BOSTON GLOBE, 2016	<b>Podcast Garage, a new community center, opens in Allston this week</b> BOSTON.COM, 2016	<b>Market forces at an Allston holiday market</b> THE BOSTON GLOBE, 2015





Zone 3 has been frequently cited by the City of Boston as the high water mark for placemaking, activation, public art, and neighborhood investment. In official planning documents like the 2022 “Western Avenue Corridor Study & Rezoning Study,” the Boston Planning and Development Authority listed Zone 3 as an important cultural asset in the community and used imagery of Zone 3 murals to highlight exemplary investments in public art. In 2021 the Mayor’s Office of Art & Culture commissioned the “Allston Brighton Arts, Culture and Placekeeping Report.” Again, Zone 3 was listed as a key public art and activation asset and numerous images of Zone 3 public art installations were used throughout the report to highlight examples of inspiring public art work. Additionally, Zone 3, its programs and art installations are highlighted in marketing materials for new non-Harvard development coming to the Allston area in efforts to project to future tenants that the neighborhood is one rich with art, culture, and engaging public amenities and attractions.

Over the years the Zone 3 team has also worked to track key quantitative metrics and data to gauge the initiative’s impact. Section 3 of this document includes more details on best practices for developing evaluation tools to track metrics and discusses the importance of this aspect to activation work.

Below are some key takeaways measuring Zone 3’s quantitative impact over the past eight years, along with a comprehensive impact measurement chart:

 Harvard has spent approximately <b>\$500,000</b> annually on Zone 3 activation programming since 2015, the vast majority of which has flowed to local entrepreneurs, artists, and other businesses in Greater Boston’s creative community	 In that time the University has invested nearly <b>half a million dollars</b> into the local arts and creative community via Zone 3 and facilitated <b>over \$24,000 in art sales</b> that have gone directly to artists	 In the past eight years <b>35 public art installations</b> have been installed in the neighborhood and over <b>1,200 artists and creative professionals</b> have found an opportunity to participate in Zone 3 programs	 Zone 3 has brought <b>78 unique programs or events</b> to the neighborhood that have helped activate Western Ave on at least <b>615 individual days</b>	 Aeronaut Allston has generated <b>over \$800,000 in beer sales</b> since launching – even with a canceled 2020 season
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Since just 2019 alone...

 Zone3WesternAve.com has seen <b>over 100,000 visitors</b> to the site	 The Zone 3 newsletter has <b>over 2,600 email subscribers</b>	 There are <b>6,800 social media followers</b> across Zone 3’s Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts	 And finally, <b>3,555 slices of pizza</b> have been served at Drinking & Drawing
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CHALLENGES + LEARNINGS

If there is one single lesson or take away from eight years of place activation work in Allston, it is that it's hard, time consuming work that requires a focused staff/team and clear plans for execution. But this lesson is not unique to Zone 3; it is a given when engaging in place-keeping and place-activation work across all contexts and geographies. Accordingly, developing goals and program objectives, setting budgets and managing invoices, brainstorming activation ideas, coordinating program partners, managing the transactional paperwork, permitting events with the city, organizing event logistics and production, and staffing the day-of activities are core competencies. Not to mention managing marketing and social media engagement, which is its own major task. All of this work is required to execute a consistent, dynamic, engaging, and high-achieving place activation strategy.

The below section highlights some of the key challenges and lessons learned that the Zone 3 team worked through and that future place activation efforts in Lower Allston may also face.

PARTNER SOURCING

One of the most important goals of the Zone3 initiative was not just to activate underutilized space but to create a platform for a range of community partners to express themselves and present their vision for creative programming. Zone 3 was developed in the context of an increasing scarcity of spaces and places for artists, performers, and other creative entrepreneurs to find a stage and blank canvas to make, create, engage, perform, and practice their work with the public. So, while many spotlight events and programs over the years were originated and managed by the Zone 3 team, the vast majority have been the product of community partnerships.

Building a broad network of partners has been, and continues to be, one of the biggest challenges the Zone 3 team works to achieve. This work is focused on ensuring that Zone 3 activations remain culturally and programmatically diverse, representative of the Lower Allston community, and also help to create an even more inclusive space for historically underrepresented voices than has traditionally been the case in the neighborhood. Partner sourcing and selection is critical to ensuring collaborators are capable of executing programs that meet the standards of the Zone 3 initiative and below are key considerations.

*Who you partner with says as much about your initiative as what the programs are.*

Align partner selection with overall program goals to ensure that the cohort of partners you work with help achieve broader goals, whether they be related to local, neighborhood engagement or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion objectives

- Be proactive about inviting groups in to work with you, don't wait for them to reach out to you
- Build in space to develop relationships with new partners from different communities
  - Building trust — especially when representing the Harvard University community — is important to ensure partners feel they are truly a part of program planning and not simply being used as tokens for the community they represent



- Create specific and clear ways for outside groups to connect and engage with you to express their interest in partnerships
  - Setting up an intake form on your website is a helpful and simple way to solicit interest; just be sure to check the responses regularly and make time to respond to each submission, even if it's to kindly say no

*Being “capable” does not require extensive experience.*

Building pathways and lowering barriers of entry for emerging entrepreneurs and up and coming artists has been an important ethos of Zone 3 programming. That means being comfortable engaging with partners who may not have prior experience executing exactly the type of activation they've proposed. That's ok!

- Be willing to embrace the experimentation & learning mantra and give new operators a chance to prove themselves – and to build the experience
- That can look like offering shorter duration/smaller scale opportunities to less experienced partners or stepping in to help with certain event management tasks that partner lacks experience in
- Before committing to working with a partner, talk to them about their work and what they do have experience in - find ways to determine their level of responsibility and general project management skills.
  - “Capable” is a great substitute for “experienced”

*Consider the right balance of “headliners” and supporting acts*

As discussed above, Zone 3 has been highly focused on providing opportunities for emerging artists and entrepreneurs. At the same time, the overall initiative has greatly benefited from close partnerships with established, popular, and well known operators and brands. Success in this work has come by finding the right balance between the established and the emerging operators.

- When launching a new activation series it often helps to partner with an established operator/partner that that can help capture audience attention and set the tone for the series ahead
  - The very first program hosted at 267 Western Ave in 2015 was an outdoor movie night series with the Brattle Theater from Harvard

Square. Zone 3 leveraged not only the Brattle's technical and movie curation expertise but also its beloved reputation to generate excitement and interest in the event long before the “Zone 3” brand had any cache

- Curate partnership pairings that set an established operator alongside an emerging one in the same space or event to ground the former in the local community and give the later a boost in the spotlight of a more well-known partner.

- In 2015 hundreds of people lined up to experience the Eat Boutique holiday market which was the creative vision of popular food blogger and cookbook author Maggie Battista. What made Eat Boutique so special was the intentional way Maggie curated the market with local micro businesses, lifting them up to give them exposure to thousands of customers that holiday season.

- When artist duo Jessie + Katie transformed an entire building into an all-sided piece of mural art in 2017 it put Western Ave on the map for public art enthusiasts. Just a few months later local Allston artist Pete Cosmos was selected to paint Zone 3's very next installation on a wall immediately next to the “art house.” Instead of overshadowing Pete's “Faces of Allston” mural, the internationally recognized Jessie + Katie's work had the effect of elevating the hyper-local piece that Pete created at 267 Western Ave.





STAFFING + PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Graffito can not emphasize enough how important it is to build a team of dedicated program/project managers to carry out the on-the-ground execution of a public activation strategy. There are always many hands willing and eager to develop a vision and brainstorm program ideas. Successfully translating ideas into tangible programs and events that work for partners/operators, the public, and the landlord’s site/facilities professionals relies on a team dedicated to managing and executing the details. Overall program management, budgeting, partner sourcing and engagement, marketing and digital programming (web/social media), community engagement, and event production are all tasks and skills that needed to be accounted for in a team. Zone 3 has for years leveraged the Isenberg Projects team in this capacity, and just recently Harvard has added a Senior Director of Placemaking to their in-house team in Allston. Depending on the scope, scale, and intensity of the strategy for your organization, this team and their focus can take different forms.

Comprehensive Year-Round Strategy  
(similar to Zone 3 scale)

- 1-2 FTE fully focused on the strategy, including goal setting, partner sourcing, budgeting/invoicing, transactional agreements
- 2-3 PTE supporting with marketing/social media, partner coordination, event logistics, day-of staffing (as needed)

Academic Year Part-Time Strategy  
(6-8 unique programs per academic year)

- 1 FTE fully focused on the strategy, including goal setting, partner sourcing, budgeting/invoicing, transactional agreements
- 1-2 PTE supporting with marketing/social media, partner coordination, event logistics, day-of staffing (as needed)

Occasional, Seasonal Event Strategy  
(2-3 unique programs per academic year)

- .5-1 FTE fully focused on the strategy, including goal setting, partner sourcing, budgeting/invoicing, transactional agreements, partner coordination, event logistics
- .5 PTE supporting with marketing/social media, day-of staffing (as needed)

ACTIVATION/PLACEMAKING STAFFING EXAMPLES

The following examples of placemaking/activation program staffing are provided to help illustrate the recommended staffing structures:



HARVARD COMMON SPACES

The Common Spaces program oversees the University’s efforts to program key campus spaces in Cambridge such as the Smith Campus Center, Science Center Plaza, and Harvard Yard with inclusive and engaging community events and activities. In order to execute on its mission for the University throughout the school year and during the summer months, the Common Spaces team includes seven full time employees.

The Common Spaces team includes:

- A director and associate director
- Events operations manager
- A/V technical expert
- Additional events operations and administrative support coordinators



THE CHARLES RIVER SPEEDWAY

The Speedway is a unique community gathering space on Western Ave in Brighton, MA that features a special events space, small format local retail vendors, a brewery, cocktail bar, world-renowned sake bar, and other small format food operators centered around the courtyard of a historic property. The Speedway staff has grown from a single GM role upon opening to a more robust team capable of executing a range of public events and managing a diverse group of operators. The team includes:

- A director and associate director
- Events operations manager
- A/V technical expert
- Additional events operations and administrative support coordinators



WS DEVELOPMENT, SEAPORT

As one of the biggest developers in the Seaport, WS has made considerable investments in high profile public events, temporary retail programs, and in developing a brand and marketing strategy for the rapidly developing neighborhood. This has included the Cisco Brewing beer garden in the summer, winter markets, and The Current retail sheds.

To execute these programs WS Development employs a 10+ person team across a range of events coordination, operations, and partner engagement roles. WS also leverages their marketing/social media, branding, and PR teams on all of their activation projects to achieve their success. Their total annual budget for programming/activation is into the millions of dollars.



BUDGET MANAGEMENT

Managing a budget for a successful place activation strategy requires a bit of finesse and agility. It’s hard to fully plan from Day 1 for every program, partner, approach, and creative solution that may come your way over the course of a fiscal year that helps give your activation strategy the special texture, character, and nuance that makes it valuable and unique for your community. Simply put: managing a budget designed for experimentation and learning requires flexibility.

Set budgets for the “must-do” programs

You likely know of one or two programs or events that are locked into your activation calendar: a winter market, spring concert series, mural on a longtime eyesore wall, etc.

- Establish budgets for those programs early and consider them locked in
- Make sure the marketing budget reflects the importance of these programs and be sure to allocate funding for extra photography, video, or other promotional activities

Feel free to budget for other concrete programs

Have a few other fun ideas with a pretty good sense of who and how they’ll get done? Go ahead and build them into your budget. It will help you stick to the plan if the dollars are allocated in the budget.

Set a line item for a “flex fund”

Build in a set amount of money in the budget for new programs, partners, and opportunities that are not visible to you on Day 1 but will inevitably come up over the course of the fiscal year.

- This is the only way to ensure you retain enough funding throughout the year to be flexible, entrepreneurial, and enterprising with new opportunities as they present themselves in real time
- As the year progresses, check back in with your budget regularly to see where your “flex funds” stand. Don’t let the year end with that line item untouched – if the year is advancing and those spontaneous opportunities haven’t come up, be proactive and reach out to new community partners. Make something special happen!
- Bottom line: you can’t be experimental if your whole budget is allocated and immovable before the programming cycle starts
- Graffito has historically held approximately 20% of the Zone 3 annual budget as a flexible / unallocated line item

CROSS-COORDINATION BETWEEN INITIATIVES

When Zone 3 launched in 2015 the Harvard Ed Portal had been open for over five years, delivering high-quality, high-impact community programming to the Lower Allston neighborhood. In order to avoid overlapping work and duplicative programs the Zone 3 and Ed Portal teams held a series of conversations to outline each group’s key objectives and goals as related to their place activation strategies. This allowed both groups to better understand what opportunities they were each best suited to pursue, when to pass along potential ideas and opportunities to the other, and when to collaborate.

Since then, the landscape in Lower Allston has changed dramatically. There are now a number of new, mostly private entities and third-party developers engaging in place activation strategies along Western Ave. While it is not always possible to coordinate with every group on every program, cross-collaboration with a consistent set of actors in the district remains important. Harvard partners and stakeholders have the benefit of shared purpose and connected teams.

The newly established Allston Community Activation Network (ACAN) is a great forum in which to engage in this collaboration. Coordination can and should help to mitigate multiple groups planning similar programs for similar dates in similar geographic locations. This unnecessary overlap can create competition for the public’s attention and dilute impact. This has been a key challenge in comparative districts like Kendall Square over the past decade where groups and landlords have avoided coordination for fear of sharing too much with competing firms. The result has been a history of stalled and disjointed neighborhood scale placemaking efforts and competing messages and branding of the district. In the past several years the Kendall Square Association has made significant headway in reversing that trend and executing a number of unifying programs and initiatives.

Coordination does not have to mean a collective decision making on what programs each group can execute or sharing of budgets. But as is discussed in the marketing section below - and throughout this entire guide – there is a lot to gain from sharing best practices, coordinating common functions like promotion, and aligning event calendars.

Other Inspiration and Comps to Study:

- Kendall Square Association, Cambridge: [kendallsquare.org](https://kendallsquare.org)
- Central Square BID, Cambridge: [centralsq.org](https://centralsq.org)
- University City District, Philadelphia: [universitycity.org](https://universitycity.org)



MARKETING OVERVIEW

When Graffito firsts began executing activation programs with Harvard in Allston, the official “Zone 3” name and brand had not been formally conceived of or launched. Marketing efforts at first heavily leaned on promoting program partners themselves and relying on those partners to leverage their existing networks and social media followings. As discussed in the “Partner Sourcing” section earlier, working with more established and well known partners offered considerable advantages in this way. At this time there also were no website or social media accounts to promote early programs. The team mostly relied on more organic and traditional community outreach methods, such as posting flyers around the neighborhood and direct outreach to key Allston community members we knew would spread the word.

The Zone 3 website and social channels were launched in 2017 to help expand and deepen the reach. The Zone 3 team quickly realized that this was not just another form of marketing programs and events. It was a new way to further the goals and increase visibility of this place-based Initiative.

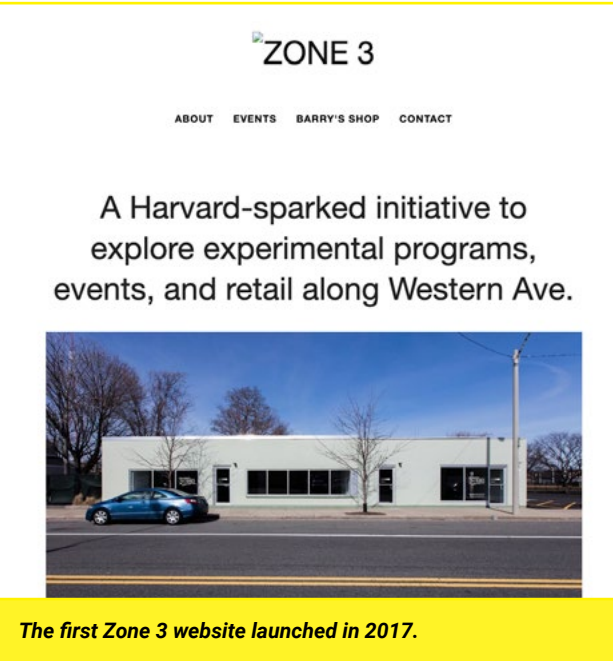
SOCIAL MEDIA

Zone 3 utilizes several social media platforms. Instagram is the primary platform as the target audience is most active on that app. Instagram allows users to share eye-catching images, which lends itself to sharing photos of public art and events. Twitter and Facebook are secondary platforms for Zone 3. Both platforms are great ways to share links and drive traffic to the Zone 3 website, and allow for followers to easily repost or share Zone 3’s posts.

Regardless of the platform,there are several key strategies to break through the noise and reach current and future followers:

- **Engaging images:** A great post starts with a great photograph, and everyone has the capability to take one with their phone. Avoid posting photos that are not well lit, grainy, or not in focus. Take an extra 15 seconds to think about the composition before pressing the ‘shutter.’
  - **TIP:** Before posting a photo, think about how someone will view it without any context.

- **Subject matter:** Audiences gravitate towards content they find interesting, relevant or entertaining. Zone 3’s highest performing posts tend to feature public art, local artists, or events like Drinking and Drawing, Art in Print, or Aeronaut Allston. These pieces of content are all central to Zone 3’s mission of community building through art and creative programs.
  - **TIP:** Use the analytics tools on the social media platforms to see which posts and which kinds of posts audiences responds best to, then consider tailoring upcoming posts to be more relevant to that audience.
- **Call to action:** Sometimes the call to action – a prompt that encourages users to take a specific action – dictates format. For example, if the goal is to drive website visits, it makes the most sense to share content on stories where you can post clickable links or to create an advertisement that features clickable links. On the other hand, if the goal is to increase awareness of a new piece of public art, a post on the grid makes the most sense.
  - **TIP:** Let the call to action dictate how, and where, information is



posted. For example, Instagram can be challenging as a platform to sell tickets because direct links are harder to access, whereas Facebook allows tickets to be linked within Facebook events.

- **Tagging:** Tagging any featured, partner, or relevant accounts creates an easy opportunity for them to repost content so that their followers sees it as well.
  - **TIP:** Tag other accounts in instagram stories to broaden the reach of events and programs
- **Engagement:** Online interactions are an extension of the greater Zone 3 initiative. As a community based program, each like, comment, follow and share a testament to programmatic value.
  - **TIP:** Engagement cannot be one sided. Spend 15 minutes a week looking for new accounts to follow and engage with. This broadens the feeling of a digital community, and increases the likelihood of those accounts following back in return. Simple comments like “Love this” or “Way to go!” foster community in the digital sphere.

MARKETING, DIVERSIFYING THE AUDIENCE

The Allston Brighton community is defined by a dynamic energy and the ebb and flow of new residents, visitors, and community members. In order to remain a relevant community asset from season to season, school year to school year, the Zone 3 team is constantly working to reintroduce Zone 3 and broaden awareness. This is achieved through several methods including:

- **Drive Awareness:** The Zone 3 team works to create opportunities for individuals new to the area to become aware of Zone 3 and its offerings by diversifying marketing touch points. We place information about programs and events on our website, eventbrite, social channels, and various online Boston calendars, like the Boston Calendar and ArtsBoston. It is also important to write and share informative press releases with various media outlets, like the arts and culture editors at Boston Magazine and the Globe. Promotional materials can also be sent to artists and community partners to share on their website, social channels, and newsletters.
- **Printed collateral:** Wayfinding, flyers, and physical signage has been integral in familiarizing pedestrians with Zone 3 programs. Each season, the Zone 3 team designs a poster that highlights larger programmatic

initiatives. This poster is hung in the windows of 267 Western Ave for the benefit of pedestrians and also sent as a PDF to various stakeholders inside and outside of Harvard so they can share the flier and poster within their own communities. Sending upcoming program calendar fliers to the Allston Community Activation Network is a great one-click way to share info with Harvard stakeholders.

- Non-digital marketing strategies have also been important to ensure that Zone 3 reaches those members of the community who lack access to the internet at home, have limited smartphone/mobile internet access, or simply are less comfortable or capable of engaging with digital platforms. This “digital equity” consideration has driven many decisions on where and how to flier the neighborhood.

- **Build digital community:** Maintain digital relationships with neighborhood partners as well as art/cultural/events organizations in the greater Boston area. Forming a symbiotic marketing relationship brings value to both audiences by sharing opportunities to engage with programs that exist within overlapping geographics or offerings.
- **Make sharing easy:** Package messaging points and graphics to send to partners so it’s easy for them to build awareness about your program with accurate information and a consistent branding. For example, a host package for Drinking and Drawing (Zone 3’s weekly art-making event hosted by a new local artist hosting each week) includes an image of that individual’s event graphic as well as a graphic featuring the entire season calendar of Drinking and Drawing events. These graphics are each formatted for multiple social outlets so that week’s host can simply upload and post them to their own accounts without any additional work.
- **Utilize the audiences of partners:** Working with artists from varied backgrounds to diversify exposure across their built-in audiences. For example, when curating a new season of Drinking and Drawing hosts, the Zone 3 team may choose to work with students from various college art programs, personal backgrounds and neighborhoods, artistic mediums,





and degrees of career success. It is likely that these individuals will share little overlap in their audiences. Artists are contracted to promote their event, therefore casting a wide net of exposure that drives event attendance throughout the entire series.

- ***Make it easy to get involved:*** After being inundated with requests to get involved in Zone 3 programs through social media and in person conversations during events, the Zone 3 team created a system to keep track of artists, partners, musical groups, and food vendors. The team built a form on the Zone 3 website that asks for all information needed to engage with a partner in one centralized place. When visitors ask how they can get involved, they are referred to this form so their contact info and interests can be documented. This has built a list of hundreds of potential partners to pull from when planning new programs and events.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PROMOTIONAL ASSETS

As Zone 3's audience grew alongside its engagement with partners along the Western Ave corridor, it was clear that Zone 3's marketing channels could be utilized as a larger community asset. The team created a few different easy ways of gathering materials to promote local stakeholder events and programs.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

Zone 3's website features a community calendar hosting information about all upcoming Zone 3 events, as well as the other events happening along the Western Ave corridor and within the Harvard community, all in one place. It can be found at [zone3westernave.com/calendar](https://zone3westernave.com/calendar)

The calendar shows events in chronological order, and distinguishes “Zone 3 Events” from “Other Things Happening in the Neighborhood”, both by category and by color. Users can sort through the calendar by category and click each listing for more information or links to ticketing.

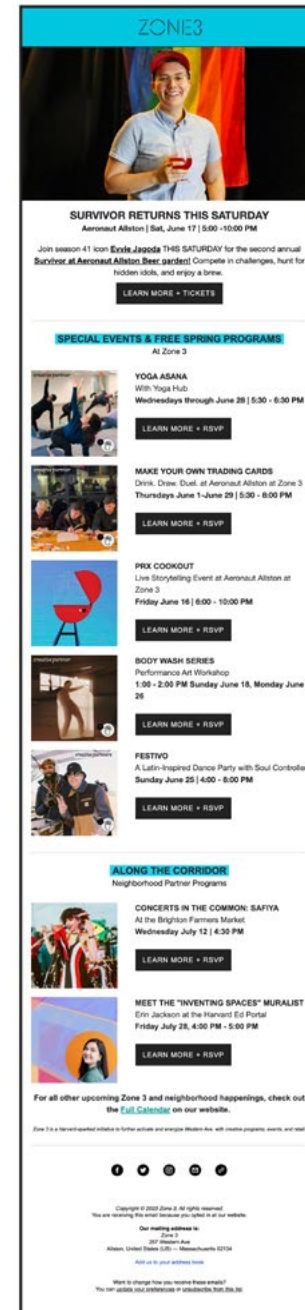


## ZONE 3 EVENTS CALENDAR

Community partners from across the neighborhood are encouraged to submit their own event listings to the Zone 3 calendar by filling out the form on our website. Once information is received, a website administrator will be alerted and able to review the event details before publishing. This ensures each event on the calendar aligns with Zone 3's audience, mission, and promotional standards. Fields include:

- Event Name
- Event Timing
- Event Details
- Event Location
- Event Organizer
- Event / Ticket Link
- Event Image
- Event Type

Partners should submit events 3-4 weeks before the event date to capture website traffic and additional views from people who regularly visit the calendar looking for events and workshops to attend.



**Example of a Zone3 newsletter.**

## NEWSLETTER + SOCIAL MEDIA

Zone 3 uses [a form on the website](#) to gather the materials needed to promote partner events on social media and in the newsletter. The Zone 3 newsletter is sent out monthly to 2,600 subscribers and forwarded to countless more. Each newsletter promotes upcoming Zone 3 events and programs, announces new public art, and highlights other events happening along the corridor.

When amplifying partner events and programs through Zone 3's social media, all relevant information is collected through a form that can then be plugged into pre-prepared templates. This method is mutually beneficial as it ensures and allows the Zone 3 team to distribute information in a timely and accurate manner.

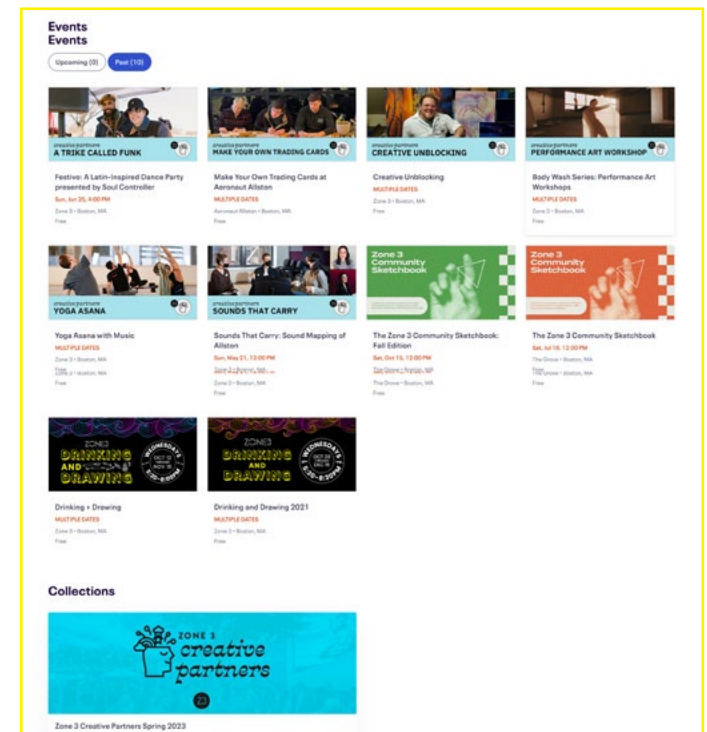
Relevant information to collect includes:

- Title of event
- Name of host or organization
- Date, time, and location of event(s)
- Short event preview blurb
- Full event description
- Event featured image
- Host or organization description
- Organization logo
- Host headshot



Eventbrite is an online event ticketing platform that Zone 3 uses to create event listings, set ticket prices (even if free), manage registrations, capture data, and promote events to a wide audience. This tool has several features that can be beneficial towards event management and data collection. It allows the Zone 3 team to view event registrations in real time to help manage attendance expectations, and provides a simple way to collect attendee information like email and zip codes that can be added to the Zone 3 email newsletter list.

More details on specific ways Eventbrite can help activation partners better manage events is shared in the Appendix of this guide.







# ACTIVATION + PROGRAMMING

- Program Planning + Execution
- Public Art: Planning, Execution + Opportunities for Neighborhood-scale Expansion
- Evaluation Tools + Metrics

## PROGRAM PLANNING + EXECUTION

Zone 3 has achieved success in planning, managing, and executing public-facing programs, events, and public art installations over the past eight years through some trial and error and by learning the lessons described in the previous sections in real time. The 80+ self-produced and hosted programs and events have all been unique and nuanced in their own ways and presented individual challenges, hurdles, and considerations. However, there are a set of standard issues that the Zone 3 team focuses on when brainstorming new program ideas, evaluating the feasibility of those ideas, and then planning and executing programs.

**SAMPLE: Community Podcast Studio**

ORIGINALLY PROPOSED JUNE 2015

**Overview:** Public-facing recording studio designed primarily for voice recording of digital podcast shows. The studio would be supported through partnerships with existing audio & podcast organizations based in Boston to run their workshops and training on creating and recording podcasts.

**Notes & Challenges:**

- "We are really going to provide a place and space for people to learn and grow in the podcasting space."
- "We are a gathering place for community of podcasters - a new form of theater."

**Frequency / Timing:** Launch in mid-June (program launch), Fall '15. Continue to have ongoing and program for long-term development.

**Expected Costs:** \$1,000 for the most modest recording equipment set-up. \$10,000 for an advanced recording equipment set-up. Upwards of \$30-40,000 for a small but professional studio.

**Next Steps:**

- Find a space that is conducive to a recording space, plus auxiliary class and meeting space.
- Identifying a partner that is committed to long-term support.
- Potential for kick-start concept by hosting a podcast related mini-conference, special speakers, workshop.

**Target Audience:** Asian-Brazilian community, broader podcast enthusiasts in Boston.

**Location:** June 3 - May 10.

**Notes & Challenges:**

- "We need to cover marketing/promotion expenses, purchase 1000/mo, and provide fee to vendor over the first 3 weeks if show start."
- "Need to identify permitting requirements for serving ice cream not from traditional ice cream truck."

**Next Steps:**

- Engage Tascam's to understand their availability, fees, etc.
- Talk to Common Space team about seating options to set up around the pop-up (bean chairs, etc).
- Review use of event code book.

**Notes & Challenges:**

- "Provision to put off without blame partnerships, but the organization adds a very strong brand credibility, ready marketing position & audience, and experienced & creative event producer."

**Next Steps:**

- Recruit and refine proposal with Charlie team.
- Talk to Common Space team about seating options (bean chairs, etc).
- Secure FTE partner.

The following section covers the method that the Zone 3 team uses to easily summarize new program proposals during brainstorming or planning stages of the work. This format has come to be known as a "Program Card" within the Zone 3 team. It describes the overall idea and bullets out critical details related

to planning, managing, and executing the program. The content in Program Cards is often a fairly high level view of these details – it is not a step by step project management tool – but it has proven to be an helpful tool when a team is developing new ideas for public-facing activations in the context of a multi-stakeholder decision-making process.

The Program Card is a simple, one-page overview of the concept you wish to develop and execute along with information on some of the more important issues other stakeholders are interested in.

## PROGRAM CARDS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- **Overview:** A brief description of the proposed program concept. Think of this as an "elevator pitch" format description – typically 2-5 sentences, with or without supporting bullets.
- **Potential Partners:** List of the key organizations, small businesses, artists, other HU departments etc that will be the core program partners and operators of the activities.
- **Target Audience:** Who is your ideal target participant/visitor? Is it a family friendly event for Allston neighbors or more focused on a 21+ crowd of Boston area art enthusiasts?
- **Frequency/Timing:** When will the program take place, at what time, and how often? Is it a one-off event or a weekly program series running for six weeks?
- **Anticipated Attendance:** Describe the expected/desired scale of the p program. A fitness class series may expect 20-30 people per class; a weekend art gallery pop-up may expect 75-125 people to come through per day; an outdoor movie night could attract 200 people.
- **Expected Costs:** This is not necessarily the expected total budget of the project but rather the costs that your organization will be responsible for. Since many project budgets are shared between the hosting organization (i.e. Zone 3) and the program partner/operator (i.e. Aeronaut Brewing Co., to use the Aeronaut Allston beer garden as an example), the expected costs listed in the program card would be only the expenses that Zone 3 is on the hook for.
- **Location:** Be as specific as possible here. "Zone 3/267 Western Ave" is less helpful than "Bldg A and Parking Lot of 267 Western Ave." This helps others involved in planning identify any operational or logistical issues that may arise related to the location.
- **Notes & Challenges:** What major issues need to be flagged from the start? Put them down on the Program Card to surface them early and facilitate problem solving conversations.
- **Next Steps:** If the program idea is fully approved by all key stakeholders, what is the most immediate next step toward making it happen?

*Note: Five sample Program Cards have been developed to demonstrate how they work and what's included, and to offer inspiration. They can be found in the Appendix of this guide under Referenced Documents.*



TRANSACTIONAL DETAILS: LICENSE AGREEMENT AND INSURANCE

In addition to the creative work that goes into developing fun and engaging activation program ideas, and then the project management work that it takes to execute those ideas, a critical piece of the activation work in Allston and on Harvard property is the transactional piece: the paperwork of executing license agreements and providing proof of insurance.

Without exception, every single program partner/operator that Zone 3 has worked with has signed a license agreement and submitted a Certificate of Insurance (COI) to Graffito, which in turn has provided them to HRE.

Partners cannot host programs as part of Zone 3 or use any space at 267 Western Ave (property owned and operated by Harvard Real Estate) without submitting this paperwork. This is an incredibly important part of the process for both Harvard and program partners; the license agreement where all of the critical details of the program are clearly articulated is the closest thing to a lease that is used. It helps “make it real” for inexperienced operators without creating too many overly burdensome barriers of entry. In a funny way, having found a clear and simple transactional path for this work has been one of the most important and impactful outcomes of Graffito’s work with Harvard on the Zone 3 initiative.

Here’s what’s involved in Zone 3’s key transactional elements:

LICENSE AGREEMENT

This contract gives program partners “permission” from Harvard (the landlord) to operate the program on Harvard property. A few key components to understand, in brief:

- “Permitted Use” refers to the set of activities and uses that are allowed to take place in the space under your License Agreement with Harvard. This section also indicates the date and time of the specific program or event you are running.
- “License Term” refers to the full scope of time that the License Agreement is valid. This is inclusive of the time when the event takes place, but it may also start before the event to allow for set up and prep and end well after the event to allow for break down and clean up after the event.

*Note: A sample copy of the standard Zone 3/HRE license agreement is included for reference in the Appendix of this guide under Referenced Documents.*

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS AND CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE (COI)

A Certificate of Insurance is required to demonstrate that program partners have complete insurance coverage, per Harvard Real Estate’s requirements. Those requirements are listed below:

- Certificate of liability insurance policy of public liability and property damage insurance covering the Space and Time of Use
- Policy for aggregate coverage of \$2 million:
  - \$1million liability per occurrence for injury or death
  - \$1million per occurrence for property damage
- Harvard is listed as an additionally insured.
  - Name to be listed: “President and Fellows of Harvard College and Harvard Real Estate – Allston, Inc.”

It is important to note that while the \$2 million in aggregate coverage sounds like a lot to some people it is actually not out of the ordinary and is easy to obtain for most small businesses.

OBTAINING INSURANCE FOR INDEPENDENT PARTNERS

In the first few years of Zone 3’s operations, obtaining sufficient insurance coverage proved a persistent challenge for small, independent program partners. Creative entrepreneurs, independent artisans, makers, and artists mostly were not operating under the formal structures of an LLC and therefore did not already have insurance for their business/activities. Harvard Real Estate’s reasonable requirement that program and event partners carry insurance led to some dead-end conversations with promising entrepreneurs who simply were not able to engage with Zone 3 due to a lack of insurance.

In recent years, Zone 3 has identified a third party online insurance provider that specifically offers short-term coverage for public and special events, and makes it simple and affordable for individuals without existing business entities established to get insurance coverage.

[TheEventHelper.com](#) offers insurance policies that meet Harvard’s coverage requirements but do not require individuals to sign on for long term policies. For example, an artist working with Zone 3 to host a gallery show can sign up for insurance coverage, get approved instantly, download a COI for a policy that spans the specific date range of the Zone 3 program listed on the license agreement. That means they are not on the hook for an annual policy nor the costs associated with that. This has allowed Zone 3 to work with even more independent operators and emerging creative entrepreneurs who are not yet fully established. Zone 3 has also at times, and for specific and highly desirable program partners, helped cover the cost of insurance through TheEventHelper.com. Costs typically run anywhere from \$75 to \$300.



PERMITTING FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

Any public event is subject to permitting requirements by the City of Boston’s Special Events department. These guidelines are often a moving target, and the most up to date information on event permitting can be found on the city’s website and it can also be very helpful to call or visit City Hall to talk through your event and the permitting process with Special Events staff in the City’s Licensing Depart. Expect anywhere from 30-90 days to permit events. Factors that impact the turnaround time include:

Expected Attendance

- The more people, the more infrastructure is required to support those people. In the Zone 3 team’s experience, events under 100 people can generally be permitted within 30-45 days. Events drawing hundreds of attendees will take 45-90 days, or more.



**Alcohol**

- If serving alcohol, several additional city agencies will need to be consulted and a “special temporary one-day liquor license” will need to be applied for and obtained. This will take more time, require security plans to make sure no one under the age of 21 is served, and require a licensed alcohol purveyor to serve and supply the alcohol unless a non-profit organization is applying as part of a fundraiser event. In some instances, police details may be required but are often waived when comprehensive event plans are submitted.
- One helpful way to have alcohol at your event without managing the licensing of that service yourself is to hire a specialty “cocktail caterer.” This is simply a private bar service company that will also manage all alcohol licensing, permits, and liability requirements. Zone 3 has a great and long standing relationship with Premier Bar Service + Catering. Note: a cocktail caterer will not manage or be responsible for other special events permits discussed above.

*More info on Special One Day Alcohol Licenses can be found at [boston.gov](https://www.boston.gov)*

**Food**

- Serving food during an event will require oversight by the Health Division of Inspectional Services (ISD), and may be subject to a health inspector onsite during the event itself. Be prepared to show the city where the food is coming from, how it will be kept warm (if necessary) and what the serving plan is.
- Given the many regulations and requirements by the Health Division of ISD for preparing and serving food to the public at events, the Zone 3 team strongly recommends the following best practices:
- Work with established local restaurants that have experience catering events; they will likely have some familiarity with the permitting process
- Expect the easiest path to permitting food service to be with pre-cooked food that is served on site for immediate consumption on single use disposable crockery
- Food trucks are a great way to bring cooked-to-order food to an event as they are permitted and licensed in a streamline process independent from special events and brick-and-mortar establishments. Once the food truck operator holds a valid annual licenses with the City it can operate anywhere on private property without additional event-specific permits

*More info on food safety at events can be found at [boston.gov](https://www.boston.gov)*



**Before Applying for Your Event Permit(s)**

It is important to be prepared and organized ahead of applying for special event permits. You will need to supply the following to the city:

- A signed letter from the property owner of the location where your event is hosted indicating that you have the permission and right to host the event at the location. For events on Harvard owned property, contact Harvard Real Estate regarding ownership of the site in question. See a sample “permission letter” that Zone 3 has used in the Appendix.
- A to-scale site plan of the event layout. Note the location of bathrooms, entrances, exits, and any ADA considerations.
- A “run of show” for the day of your event. This goes through all your rental orders, the overall event flow of setup, the event itself, and breakdown.
- Individual permits may be needed for any tents, generators, cooking equipment, or heaters. Get the information about the specific items you’re renting and package it for the city.

Depending on the number of permits you will need to pull, expect this to cost anywhere from \$50-500. It is important to note that police details, fire details, and health inspectors cost additional hourly rates not included in that range.

*More info on special events permitting can be found at [boston.gov](https://www.boston.gov)*



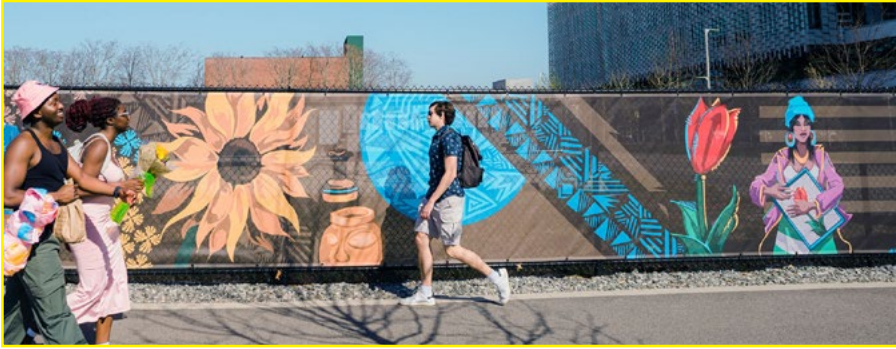
PUBLIC ART: PLANNING + EXECUTION  
NOTES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE EXPANSION

When Graffito began working with Harvard in Allston, the team put forward a theory for what the neighborhood spirit was truly about and how the activation work to come could help support that spirit. We saw Allston as a vibrant and culturally rich community full of artists, musicians, performers, makers, and other creative entrepreneurs; but that the neighborhood lacked spaces to practice, create, perform, make, or otherwise showcase the art and cultural expression of those who lived in and made up the community. This theory has proven to be true in many ways and the pursuit of that original vision to fill a certain void has driven many of the strategies and decisions around specific Zone 3 activation work over the past eight and a half years. None more than Zone 3’s highly successful public art initiatives.

Since 2015 Zone 3 has executed over 30 art installations along the corridor, and has recruited, managed, and contracted with over 1,200 local artists and other creative professionals to execute these projects. This work has transformed the physical character of Western Ave’s streetscape, provided launching pads for emerging artists and made Allston a destination to experience artwork by regionally and nationally renowned artists. Among the nearly one hundred unique activations Zone 3 has executed, the public art programs also happen to be among the most popular, successful, and scalable. A key partner in this public art effort has been Isenberg Projects, who has taken a strong lead on artist engagement, project planning, and project management and execution.

In an effort to inform and inspire Harvard’s partners, we have developed a set of detailed execution notes for Zone 3’s primary public art programs:

- Walls on Western
- Art in Print
- Drinking and Drawing
- Art Scrim



These notes are based on the Zone 3 team’s deep experience developing these programs, executing them repeatedly, and continuously refining best practices. The result is a series of program plans that maintain transparent transactional models and efficient project management processes that make it easier to scale up a world class public art program all along Western Ave.

The goal of sharing the following execution notes, derived from Isenberg Projects’ project management direction, is to pull back the curtain so that partners are inspired to carry out similar installations and programs along their own real estate in Lower Allston. We’ve also identified ways for third party partners and developers to get involved in these existing public art programs and initiatives.

EXECUTION NOTES: WALLS ON WESTERN

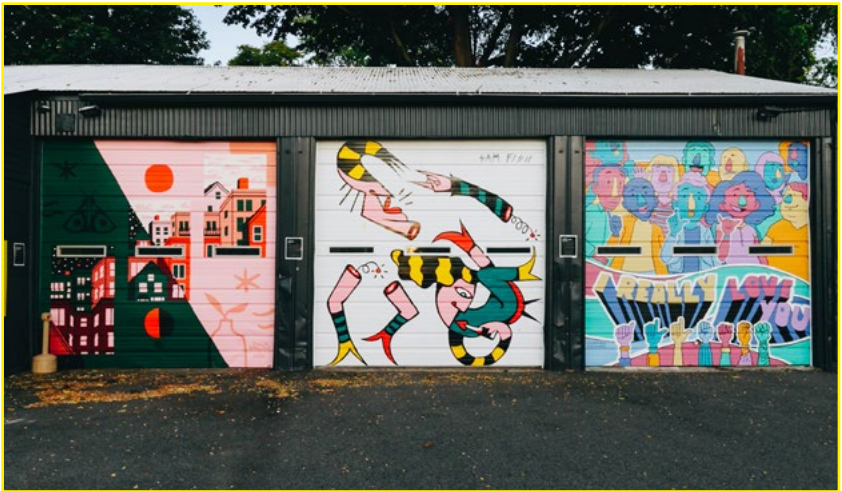
About Walls on Western

Zone 3’s flagship public art program, Walls on Western gives local emerging artists high-profile walls along Western Ave as canvases for murals to showcase their art and contribute to a vibrant streetscape. For many of the artists included in the program, this opportunity represented their first mural ever and served as a launchpad to future large scale projects. Since 2017, seven artists have produced murals through Walls on Western: Pete Cosmos (2017), IMAGINE (2018), Chris Delorenzo (2018), Sam Fish (2019), Sabrina Dorsainvil (2019), Julia Emiliani (2019), and Sophy Tuttle (2020).

The Zone 3 team works closely with each artist and is deliberately hands-on during each installation, ensuring successful, safe, timely project execution. Zone 3’s artist engagement also serves to provide a meaningful learning experience that leaves artists better equipped to tackle their next mural project. By the time of the mural’s completion, artists have not only learned how to create their art at a large scale, but also the logistics required to do so. The Zone 3 team aids artists in project management plans, lift certifications, permitting, insurance requirements, contract terms, and on-site best practices.

The following Key Considerations help explain the program’s success and can help others plan for similar projects:

- **Strategic Locations:** Mural locations have been selected to highlight key nodes of activity (i.e. Zone 3 hub at 267 Western Ave) or draw attention and foot traffic to farther, less traveled parts of the corridor (i.e. Sophie Tuttle’s work at 135 Western Ave across from SEC)
- **High Impact:** The bright, bold colors of Walls on Western murals have helped transform the once drab and monotone streetscape of Western Ave; these installations are eye-catching, noteworthy, and illicit conversation.
- **Patient Planning:** Executing outdoor mural painting with emerging artists is more complex than most people recognize. Long lead times allow for detailed planning and preparation, and efficient and safe installation





Planning + Development

Zone 3 has developed a variety of unique approaches to artist selection for the seven Walls on Western murals: an open call for art with a jury making final selections; an open call with a community vote to determine final selections; and a privately curated approach by Harvard and its consultants.

Regardless of the approach, direct outreach to artist and arts organizations is key in the success of the endeavor, as is a community-forward prompt. Prompts are integral to managing the overall art direction of the artists' submissions. Successful prompts are tied to the community surrounding the site, such as "what's your Allston story?" or "science and engineering history in Boston" or "what's your favorite thing about Allston?" The incorporation of any branding or the use of brand guidelines should be avoided. Any mural that includes these elements is considered signage by the city of Boston and subject to additional permitting requirements.



In 2017 Zone 3 developed and promoted an open Call for Art that asked artists to share their "Allston story." Long time Allston artist Pete Cosmos described his deep connections to the neighborhood's arts scene and was selected to bring his "Faces of Allston" work to life on a wall of 267 Western Ave.

small stipends of \$400-\$600 allocated for the artists' design time. Once all designs have been submitted, the jury reviews and makes a final selection.

This selection approach requires a long lead time to ensure that artists have ample time to find out about the opportunity. It is recommended that 1-2 months is spent selecting jurors, writing the call for artists, and developing a promotional plan. Plan for an additional 2 months to accept and review submissions. The jurying process can vary depending on the volume of submissions, but can take up to a month.

Descriptions of Artist Selection Options:

Open Call For Art

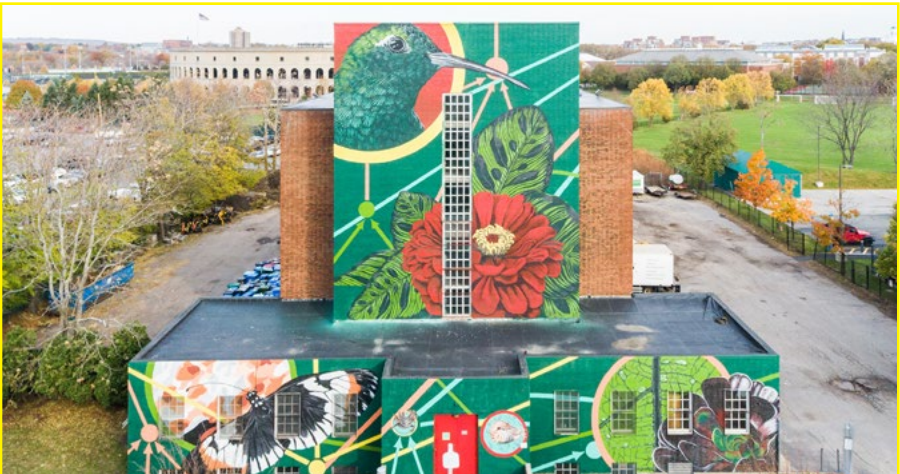
4 month lead time (not including installation)

An Open Call for Art is similar to an RFP and is drafted with transparency on all of the technical requirements, artist fee details, timelines, and other key info listed. A call for art can include a specific theme, prompt or other parameters for how artists should ideally be designing their mural submissions. Most calls ask artists to answer a few brief questions and provide a narrative description of the proposed art and how it relates to the themes of the prompt. The open call is then promoted and circulated widely. All interested artists return their submissions for review by a jury.

The jury may include a variety of stakeholders: staff from the organizing entity, Allston community members, other experienced members of the arts community, small business owners, etc. It is a good practice to list the jurors in the Call for artists. After reviewing all submissions, the jury selects their preferred artist for the project. Artists and arts organizations look more favorably on calls for art that ask for samples of past work in initial submissions, in lieu asking for new and unique designs before being selected or paid. Jurors can select several artists to move into design review, with



"All That Empty Space," the third mural in Zone 3's Walls on Western series, was created in 2018 following a community vote to determine the next piece of public art at Zone 3. The Zone 3 team first issued a call for artists and then chose three semi-finalists for the community to choose from. The two week voting process took place in-person at the Aeronaut Allston beer garden at Zone 3. Illustrator and designer Chris DeLorenzo's design was voted the winner and he installed the piece on the side of the PRX Podcast Garage the following month.



In October 2020, Zone 3 worked with Boston-based artist, Sophy Tuttle, to transform the facade of the old New England Deposit Library at 135 Western Avenue. Due to COVID restrictions at the time, and the very large scale of the mural site, the Zone 3 team intentionally sought out Sophy through direct curation for the project based on her strong prior experience. Her nature-focused mural takes up over 3,000sq ft, making the 7th mural in the series the largest one yet.

Call For Art With Community Vote

6 month lead time (not including installation)

This selection process builds on the traditional call for art process described above but allows for more direct community engagement. Once the call for art results in first round artist submissions, a jury selects a small number (3-5) of artists to develop preliminary designs for their mural concept that will be presented to the public for an in-person community vote. As described above, a small stipend should be provided to artists creating original work in this phase.

The community vote aspect can be added on as an activity to an existing popular community event to ensure that the voters are representative of the community itself. Organizing, managing, and promoting the community vote is itself a task that requires considerable time and staffing, but can result in deeper, more meaningful connections between the community, the organizers, and the final artwork.

*Note: Online votes can also be considered, but require safeguards to ensure there is a level playing field. It has been Zone 3's experience that artists with the biggest following and social media reach can have an unfair advantage in online voting.*

Direct Curation

3 month lead time (not including installation)

This selection process offers the most control over the outcome and is the fastest path to producing a mural, but involves the least amount of community engagement. This option may be advantageous if there is a short lead time and the team already has an artist in mind for the project. Direct outreach to the artist is step one, a design contract follows, and then the artist shall create design options for the site for the team to review. Once a design is agreed upon, an implementation contract would be drafted and the installation scheduled.



Community Engagement

Murals are an integral part of a vibrant streetscape, but their creation process can lack engagement with the community surrounding the site. Beyond the selection or jury process, the Zone 3 team has found it imperative to add community programs or events to the artist’s scope as a way of increasing the neighborhood’s connection to the artwork. This can take the form of an art making workshop, an artist talk, community drop in hours to meet the artist, a mural completion celebration, or having the artist speak at local schools. These events create a lasting connection between the artist, their work, and the neighborhood.

A program like the Community Sketchbook events allowed the public to actually assist in the creation of the public artwork, an added touchpoint that neighborhood residents remembered long after the work was complete.

Artist David Teng Olsen visited the children at Charlesview’s after school program with coloring book pages based on his 2017 Walls on Western mural, inviting the kids to color their own version.

Jessie and Katey offered community silkscreening workshops during their month-long residency at Zone 3 installing their immersive piece “Allumination.” The prints were later cut out and community members and passersby helped wheat-paste them onto the front facade of 267 Western.

Zone 3’s very first public art installation was hung over the side of a three storey building on Western Ave. When “Yellow Tree” by Zacharie Lanoue was eventually removed, Zone 3 transformed the giant piece of vinyl banner material that Zacharie’s photo-illustration was printed on into several hundred specialty made tote bags. These bags were given to community members over the course of a few years, recycling the physical vinyl and keeping the memory of the piece alive.

Ways To Get Involved

Partners, Harvard stakeholders, and area businesses can get involved in a Walls on Western project in any of the following ways:

- **Program sponsorship:** This is the most direct path to leveraging the project management experience, artist network, and community engagement insights of the Zone 3 team to bringing a new public art mural to the neighborhood on stakeholders’ property. Stakeholders can opt to sponsor some or all of the budget for a Walls on Western mural on a wall on their property. This sponsorship will be noted in all public-facing materials and in the permanent signage about the piece.
- **Jury member:** If doing an open call, a stakeholder can request to be a member of the jury that selects the artist to move forward with.
- **Artist recommendations:** If using a direct curation method for the piece, stakeholders can offer artist recommendations for initial outreach.
- **Promotional support:** Stakeholders can share information about the call for art, the finished mural, or any community engagement events with their networks.



Project Timeline (For Walls on Western Projects Managed by Zone 3)

- Month 1**
  - Project site and measurements confirmed; SOW finalized and **first invoice submitted to sponsoring stakeholder.**
  - An Open Call prompt and menu of potential jurors, including bios and relevant experience, are presented to the stakeholder group for final selection. **Stakeholders will have one week to select jurors and approve the prompt.**
  - Jurors notified and engaged.
  - Open Call submission portal created and outreach plan developed
  - **Promotional graphics developed for stakeholders to share with their networks.**
- Months 2-3**
  - Call is open for artist submissions. Stakeholders continue their direct outreach to their networks, in addition to the Zone 3 team’s marketing and direct artist outreach.
  - Submissions close. Typically 80% of Open Call submissions will come in the last 24 hours it is open. If not enough quality submissions have been received, stakeholders can consider the option of extending the call one more week and doing a large internal push of direct artist outreach.
  - Ongoing promotion and direct artist outreach
- Month 4**
  - Jurors review submissions. **Jury will have one week to review and score submissions.** A zoom call with the jury will be used to determine finalists.
  - Finalists contracted for the design phase. Artists should be given 1 - 2 weeks to create their design.
  - Jurors will have 2-3 days to review final designs and make a recommendation to stakeholders of selected artist to move forward with.
  - **NOTE:** It is most appropriate to allow the jury to lead the selection process and defer to their decisions. Stakeholders that have fully sponsored the mural project may review the final selection before any final decisions and give sign-off within 1-2 business days. In the rare event there is a conflict or serious issue with the artist or design selected, a “veto” is permitted. This course is very rare and has not been employed to date in a Zone 3 public art project.
- Month 5**
  - Installation dates confirmed and detailed in an artist contract and license agreement. License agreement drafted with the artist if necessary.
  - Project management plan for the installation; if on Harvard property confirm with Harvard Environmental Health & Safety and consult HPAC for public messaging guidance.
  - Rentals reserved, if necessary and photo/video scheduled
  - Temporary signage (i.e. “Art in progress!”) designed and printed
  - Depending on the scope and scale of the work, installation can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks
- Install**

Budget Ranges

Budget is based on 2023 pricing. Costs will likely increase in subsequent years.

Project Management	\$5000 - \$15000 depending on scope	Covers the management of the call for art, jury selection, stakeholder involvement, art direction, and arranging all necessary items for installation (permits, safety plans, rentals, etc)
Promotional Design, Renderings and Signage	\$5,000 - \$8,000	Covers the design and production of promotional assets, in-progress signage, permanent signage for the mural printed on coroplast, and the creation of any renderings needed
Call for Art Entry Portal and Marketing Budget	\$2,500	Covers the necessary website plugins to create the submission portal, and a budget to market the call using paid advertisements
Artist Fee	\$5,000 - \$35,000	Covers the artist fee for the project, using a \$30 - \$50 / square foot rate
Materials	\$2,500 - \$10,000	Paint, brushes, drop cloth, primer
Production Items	\$5,000 - \$25,000	Ladders, scaffolding, scissor or boom lifts, painting assistants, PPE, storage pod rentals
Community Engagement Event	\$10,000 - \$25,000	An event with light food and non-alcoholic beverages and a fun activity



EXECUTION NOTES: ART IN PRINT

About Art in Print

Art in Print repurposes traditional newspaper bins and fills them with limited editioned newsprint posters designed by local artists. The public can purchase a print for 25¢. At its core, Art in Print is designed to make buying art more accessible to the public, while simultaneously adding emerging artists to the Zone 3 network. The format allows for the team to work with a large volume of artists spanning painting, illustration, photography, collage, and poetry. This has led Art in Print to be a common entry point for artists to enter the Zone 3 programmatic ecosystem, with several moving on to other programs, like hosting a Drinking and Drawing, painting a mural through Walls on Western, or designing a section of Art Scrim.

Over 150 local artists have been involved in the program since its launch in 2018, resulting in over 10,000 prints collected by the Allston community. Released quarterly, each volume sells out within one to two months. Art in Print also continues to be one of the best performing programs on Zone 3’s social media channels, especially Instagram. Art in Print has been so successful that additional bins were added at SEAS and Library Park in 2021, expanding the number of bins from four to six, and increasing the number of artists per volume from 10 to 12.

The following Key Considerations help explain the program’s success and can help others plan for similar projects:

- **Special Edition Volumes:** The “scarcity” of each print within each volume generates excitement and drives people to the boxes to grab their favorite print while it lasts
- **Strategic Locations:** Box locations have been selected to highlight community partners (i.e. Harvard Ed Portal; Honan Allston Library) and draw traffic to key neighborhood destinations (i.e. Pavement Coffee; SEC)
- **Accessible to Emerging Artists:** Relatively simple requirements and low technical skills threshold makes Art In Print the most accessible program for new and emerging artists, leading it to have a huge roster of participants



Planning + Development

Each bin is sourced from a refurbisher in North Carolina, painted teal, and shipped up to Boston via freight. Branding and signage is applied to the exterior of the bin by the Zone 3 team, along with a combination lock on the quarter receptacle. Bin locations are chosen to be in either a high foot traffic area or an area that more foot traffic is desired. Adding new bins in strategic locations associated with and in collaboration with key Zone 3 partners is possible. **NOTE:** Each new bin has a minimum lead time of twelve weeks.

Each bin measures 16.25” D X 19.25” W X 48 5/8” H, weighing 110 lbs each. Bins are further weighted down with bricks or sandbags, and are chained to a post, pole or U-bolt on the property. Due to permitting regulations with the City of Boston, bins must be located on private property, avoiding sidewalks or public parks, and not have the potential to impede on walkways or building access.

Artist outreach and selection is done as holistically as possible. The Zone 3 team aims for this program to have the lowest barrier to entry of the entire program roster, with minimal curation from the internal team. Artists are found through the “Get Involved” form on the Zone 3 website, direct outreach on social media, or sourced from past event participants that expressed interest in the program. Rather than asking artists to create new work for the program, the Zone 3 team reviews the artist’s past work and reaches out with a few potential art pieces in mind. Artists are paid a small stipend, and keep all the rights to their images.

As a part of this outreach, the Zone 3 team works to ensure that each volume of Art in Print has a diverse representation of mediums, artistic styles, artist backgrounds, career levels, and location within Boston. Special emphasis is paid to artists living or working in Allston Brighton, along with ensuring DEI goals are met with each volume.

In order to streamline the file prep and production, artists are given a template set up with a CMYK color profile (300dpi or vector artwork required), and parameters to maintain print quality with a nontraditional

paper. Upon receipt of the files, artists are paid \$250 for their participation in the project, with an invoice template provided to them for ease of processing. Artists are also asked to provide a headshot to be used for digital promotion and to answer a Q+A Google form that is used to populate artist features on the Zone 3 website and on instagram.

While waiting for files to arrive, the Zone 3 team lays out the promotional strategy to maximize the program’s online presence. Graphics are updated to represent the upcoming volume, with each artist getting individualized graphics to share their involvement in the program. The Zone 3 website is updated with artist bios and Q+As. A press release is drafted if deemed necessary.

As a part of the launch, a social media plan is developed to maximize the visibility of each artist involved in the project. The Zone 3 team takes photos of each poster next to its bin for use by the participating artist, and is in close communication on the launch date with that volume’s cohort. Sharing the project on social media is part of the expectation of being a part of Art in Print, and artists have been excited for the increased exposure.

After the launch, bins are restocked every other week and the quarters are counted to gauge foot traffic in each location.



Ways to Get Involved

Partners, Harvard stakeholders, and area businesses can get involved in the project in any of the following ways:

- **Volume sponsorship:** Stakeholders can sponsor a full volume of the series. This sponsorship will be noted on the back of each print, on the bins themselves, and on all promotional materials.
- **Purchase a new bin:** Stakeholders can contact the Zone 3 team to get a new bin added to the network and located on their property. The Zone 3 team will manage all procurement and installation.
- **Guest curation:** Guest curation is an opportunity that the Zone 3 team is eager to explore with key Harvard stakeholders / partners. Potential opportunities include collaborating on a prompt or theme for the volume, or working to direct partner affiliated artists into the volume.

Project Timeline

Week 1

- New bin placement confirmed with business owners and Harvard stakeholders. **NOTE:** Bins must be placed on publicly accessible private property (can not be located on public sidewalks or streets)
- Scope of project confirmed, SOW finalized and first invoice submitted
- Project management plan drafted
- Existing bins are examined for repair needs, most commonly involving removing stickers, replacing graphics, removing foreign coins jammed in the coin slot, or replacing the entire coin mechanism if necessary.
- Artist outreach plan drafted and circulated internally
- The next volume of Art in Print is announced on social media, asking for artists to submit their materials if interested in participating

Week 2

- Artist templates and informational one pagers updated for the current Volume
- Artist research begins, noting 2-3 files from each artist that the team would like to include in the volume. **This menu is presented to stakeholders, who have 2-3 days to give approval**
- **NOTE:** Stakeholders that have fully sponsored a new volume may review the final art selections before any final decisions. In the rare event there is a conflict or serious issue with an artist or design, a “veto” is permitted. This course is very rare and has not been employed to date in a Zone 3 public art project.

Week 3

- Artist outreach begins. Artists have 2 weeks to submit files and the Q+A to the Zone 3 team

Timeline Continues on Next Page →

Week 4

- Final artwork presented to stakeholder group. Approval needed within 3 days.
- Graphic suite is updated with new maps, artist signage, and any bin signage that needs to be replaced
- The Zone 3 website is updated with artist Q+As and information about the new volume. This page remains hidden until the program launch.
- Social media and promotional plan drafted

Week 5

- All files received from artists and sent to the printer

Week 6

- Prints shipped to the Zone 3 team for distribution
- Social media and promotional plan finalized
- Artist-specific graphics created for artist promotion

Week 7

- Volume launch! Artwork is delivered to each bin, signage updates are installed, and photos are taken of each print next to its bin for artist sharing
- Instagram Reel is created for launch announcement
- Social strategy coordinated with the artists for maximum engagement

Ongoing

- Quarter collection, data tracking, social media features on each artist

Budget Per Volume

Budget is based on 2023 pricing. Costs will likely increase in subsequent years.

Project Management	\$3,500 - \$6,000	Covers artist management and outreach, refilling bins, tracking metrics
Promotional Design and File Prep	\$3,000 - \$5,000	Mockups, color correction, sizing, test prints, print files. Creation of promotional materials across print and digital platforms
Call for Entry Portal and Marketing Budget	\$2,500	Covers the necessary website plugins to create the submission portal, and a budget to market the call using paid advertisements
Artist Fees	\$3,000 - \$4,000	Covers the artist fees for each poster, at \$250 per artist. This budget reflects 12-16 artists
New Bin	\$2,000 - \$3,000	A new newspaper bin, paint, signage, and placement
Printing	\$2,500 - \$4,000	Printing of newspapers and additional signage materials



the Zone 3 team to bringing a new section of scrim to the neighborhood on stakeholders’ property. Stakeholders can opt to sponsor some or all of the budget. This sponsorship will be noted in all public-facing materials and in the permanent signage about the piece.

- Artist recommendations:** If using a direct curation method for the piece, stakeholders can offer artist recommendations for initial outreach.

**Note:** All Art Scrim installations include informational panels that highlight details about the project and artist bios. These panels also provide a place to highlight project partners and display partner logos.

EXECUTION NOTES: ART SCRIM

About Art Scrim

Art Scrim is a temporary outdoor gallery program showcasing local artists on construction fencing. Art Scrim builds on other Zone 3 programs like Walls on Western and Art in Print, continuing a commitment to the creative community and energizing the streetscape along the Western Ave corridor. Since 2019 Zone 3 has installed five Art Scrim projects on Western Ave, N Harvard Street, and Academic Way.

The following Key Considerations help explain the program’s success and can help others plan for similar projects:

- Fast & Easy Installation:** The all-digital design work and third-party contracted printing and installation lead to quick all-in project timelines and all-weather installs
- Accessible to Emerging Artists:** Relatively simple requirements and low technical skills threshold makes Art In Print a highly accessible program for new and emerging artists
- Dual Purpose Location Selection:** Born out of a desire to conceal unsightly construction sites, art work can highlight a key stretch of roadway (i.e. Academic Way) and also temporarily hide what’s behind a fence (i.e. construction laydown at the Gateway site)

Ways To Get Involved

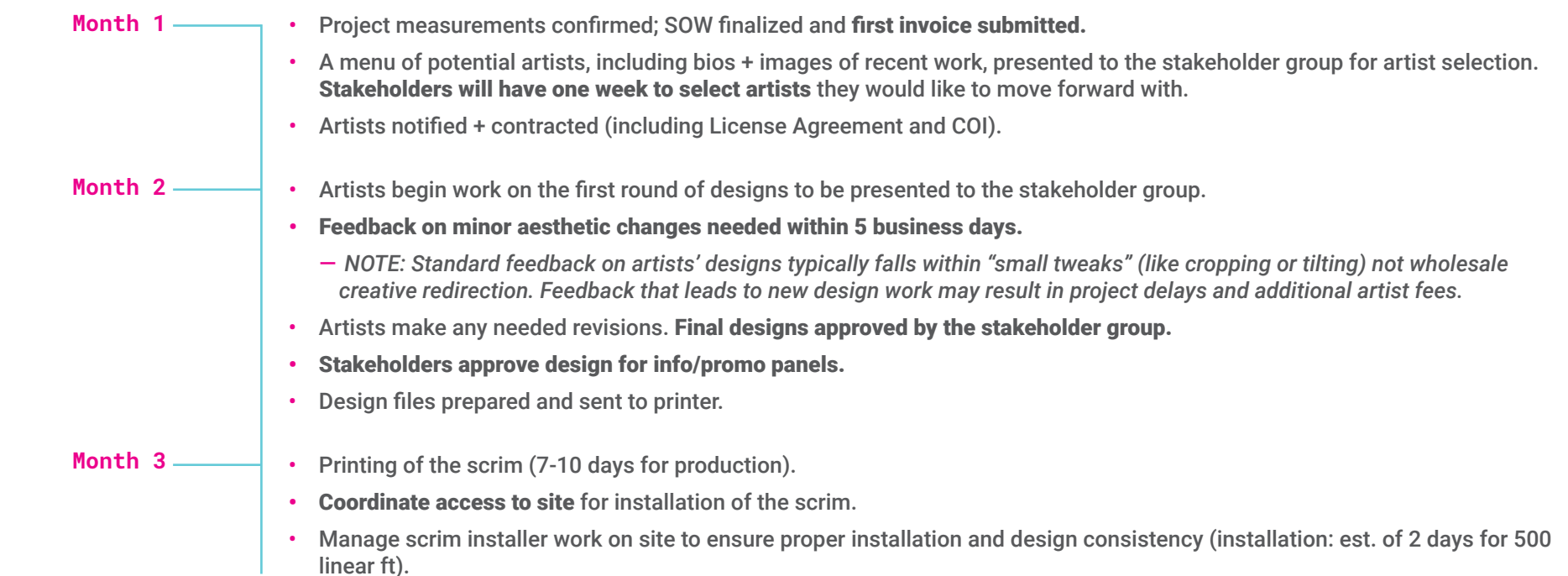
Partners, Harvard stakeholders, and area businesses can get involved in an Art Scrim project in any of the following ways:

- Program sponsorship:** This is the most direct path to leveraging the project management experience, artist network, and community engagement insights of



Planning + Development Project Schedule

The following three-month planning + development project schedule shows critical benchmarks in the project process with stakeholder responsibilities highlighted in bold.



Estimated Budget: \$175/Linear Foot

Budget is based on 2023 pricing. Costs will likely increase in subsequent years.

Project Management	\$7000 - \$15000 depending on scope	Covers overall project management, art direction, artist management, and arranging all necessary items for installation
File Prep, Promotional Design, Renderings and Signage	\$7,000 - \$10,000	Covers measuring the site, creating file templates, file prep for all artwork, and any renderings needed. This also covers the design and production of promotional assets and any branded panels
Artist Fee	\$4,000 - \$8,000	Covers the artist fee for the project (for 100 - 200 ft of scrim designs)
Scrim Materials	\$5,000 - \$15,000	Printed scrim (this price is highly dependent on scope and any supply chain issues)
Scrim Installation	\$2,000 - \$8,000	Installation of the scrim



- No Agenda:** Artist facilitators demonstrate their unique techniques and offer a prompt for art-making but after that there is no step-by-step to follow or pressure to produce just the right final image — just hanging out with friends being creative is the draw

Ways to Get Involved

While the *Drinking and Drawing* program does fall under Zone 3’s public art portfolio, it is inherently a public event based program instead of an art installation. To that end, the ways for stakeholders to get involved in this program are both unique and specific to the nature of hosting events.

- Hosting an event:** Stakeholders can host a Drinking and Drawing event at their site. Ideal sites have tables and chairs for 100 people, art supplies, and space for a small bar setup.
- Sponsorship of the program at 267**
- Guest curation:** Guest curation is an opportunity that the Zone 3 team is eager to explore with key Harvard stakeholders / partners. Potential opportunities could include collaborating on a prompt or theme for one or more events in the series, or directing stakeholder affiliated artists to serve as *Drinking and Drawing* event hosts.

Planning + Development

The planning and development phase length of *Drinking and Drawing* depends on the number of events included in the series. The Zone 3 team has seen great success with a roster of 8-10 events, and the following project plan uses that number of events as a baseline.

- Week 1

  - Event location, dates, and times solidified. SOW drafted and invoice submitted
  - Project management plan drafted
  - Artist outreach plan is drafted for approval from project stakeholders. **Approval needed within one week**
  - Series announced on Zone 3 social media, with a link to the artist involvement form for people to get in
- Week 2

  - Vendors Cocktail caterer booked for each event
  - Artist outreach begins
  - Marketing and social media plan implemented
  - Eventbrite set up
- Week 3

  - All artists confirmed for event dates
- Week 4

  - Website and eventbrite updated to reflect artist hosts
  - Hosts announced on social media
  - Graphic package created for hosts to share their involvement on social media
- Week 5

  - Artists deliver their plans for their event, including a materials list for the Zone 3 team to purchase
- Week 6

  - All materials purchased
  - Promotion continues
- Week 7

  - Materials moved to the event location
  - Artist hosts participate in a brief Q&A to be used for marketing and promo
- Week 8

  - Events begin

Budget Per Single Event

Budget is based on 2023 pricing. Costs will likely increase in subsequent years.

Project Management + Admin	\$2,500	Covers artist management, event management, and administration support
Design + Marketing	\$1,350	Covers updating existing brand and assets with new event details and Eventbrite setup
Artist Fee	\$350	Supporting local artists with market rate wages, covering pre-event prep and day-of work
Art Materials	\$300	Papers, pens, markers, scissors, glue, etc.
Food, Bev, and Cocktail Caterer	\$875	Service of permitted and licensed bartender, beer and wine, and pizza
Staffing	\$500	One Zone 3 team staff assistant onsite



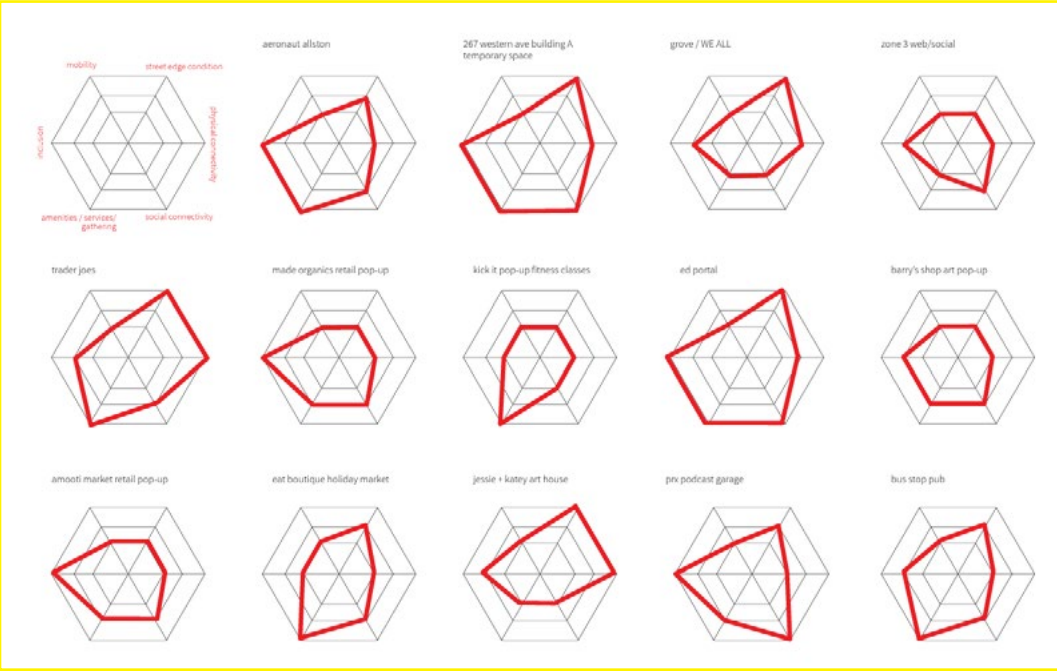


EVALUATION TOOLS + METRICS

As is the case for any project or initiative, evaluating “success” requires tracking key measurements. For Zone 3, these efforts have evolved considerably over the years and continue to change as overall program goals change. Consistent with themes expressed throughout this Guide, flexibility in applying new tools for evaluating shifting goals and priorities has proven to be critical.

Each new Zone 3 program offers the potential to gain new information and insight into what types of activations, partners, and promotion are most successful in the neighborhood. This allows the Zone 3 team to iterate and pivot in real time. Regardless of the method, the team has strived to set goals for each new program from the start, reflecting the overall priorities of the Zone 3 initiative that quarter or year. This could be focused on expanding the number of programs conducted in spaces beyond 267 Western Ave or increasing the number of BIPOC/WMBE program partners; increasing the total number of individual artists engaged or enhancing availability of neighborhood amenities through expanded retail experiments.

Zone 3’s evaluation tools have not remained static over the years. The team has adopted and developed a range of different tools and approaches depending on goals and the broader context. A few recent tools and approaches are described below.



context of the work (COVID-induced changes just a year later) and evolving priorities (tracking participants during online-only programs) forced the team to shift approach. Additionally, one drawback to the evaluation webs was that it relied completely on subjective measurement and scoring. More concrete data driven evaluation allows for stronger reporting and analysis over time.

DATA COLLECTION

Understanding the objective scope, scale, and impact of activation programs required collecting and tracking hard data and stats. As described earlier in this Guide in Section 2, the Zone 3 team has worked hard to track key quantitative metrics and data to gauge the initiative’s impact over the years.

At the start of every program, goals and success metrics are mapped out. These goals range from the number of overall attendees, total art sales, the number of attendees from the neighborhood, the number of artist partners, the number of Allston/Brighton based partners, DEI goals and demographics of program partners, press coverage, total funds invested in the program work, and more. The team then forms strategies for measuring and collecting the relevant data to add to a master tracking matrix. A copy of this tracking matrix is shared in the Referenced Documents of this guide.



future programming would be the most interesting to the Zone 3 audience. These often come with an incentive of being entered to win a small gift card to a local business.

It is imperative in an ever changing neighborhood like the Western Ave corridor to continually challenge assumptions and prior goals. By being curious about what aspects of a program went well and what could have gone better, the Zone 3 team has had the opportunity to constantly improve programs from year-to-year ensuring that programming does not feel stale.

DIGITAL FEEDBACK

Another form of evaluation is direct user feedback. Zone 3 employs this method often in a few ways, and mostly digitally. In the 2020 program Window Shopping, the Zone 3 team wanted to find ways to connect Harvard Square and Allston through programming that encouraged participants to visit both neighborhoods. Artist-made products were displayed in the windows of vacant storefronts along Western Ave and in Harvard Square. The team used QR codes to measure the engagement at each location, and was able to see how many participants visited all the locations.

In addition to data gathered throughout the program’s lifespan, the Zone 3 team sends feedback surveys via email to event attendees and program partners. These surveys can uncover new insights into program strengths and weaknesses, which is incredibly valuable for recurring programs. Yearly general audience surveys are sent out on social media to gather feedback on what types of





# IV CONCLUSION

- Closing Notes
- Summary of Workshop Feedback
- Summary Recommendations for Neighborhood-Scale Expansion
- Thanks and Acknowledgements

## CLOSING NOTES

The physical character of the Western Avenue corridor has changed dramatically in the eight and half years since Graffito’s work with Harvard began. New residential development has brought new neighbors to Allston and new businesses have opened. Harvard’s landmark Science and Engineering Complex opened and the Enterprise Research Campus is ready to break ground. A corridor that was once seen as a pass-through on the way elsewhere is now a true destination for public art, cultural amenities, and community gathering.

With even more Harvard and privately driven development now underway and on the horizon, the interest in even more neighborhood activation, public-facing programming, and beautification through public art will certainly grow. The success of Zone 3 and other Harvard efforts, such as those executed by the Ed Portal, offer an important roadmap for other partners who will be seeking to meet the demand for new and novel public activation strategies. Scaling the impact of the work to date across the neighborhood will depend on collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The development of this Guide was intended to initiate the sharing of best practices and lessons learned to ensure that all partners engaged in this work in Lower Allston hit the ground with as many tools to be successful as possible. Partners should keep the following considerations in mind after reading this Guide but before launching into new activation projects:

### 1. Set a budget before the fun starts

Before the work begins to develop ideas for fun and creative programs it is essential to set an annual budget for activation work. Creating a budget “envelope” creates concrete and realistic guardrails for brainstorming and planning work, and provides predictability for managers.

### 2. Identify who will manage and execute the work

Identifying a dedicated team that will be focused on the detailed, in-the-weeds work of executing events, programs, and other activations is critical for the success of the overall initiative. Many hands “make light work;” dedicated hands make smarter, more impactful activation work.

### 3. Make a plan, but keep it flexible and responsive to feedback

Plan the plan and work the plan. It’s a common refrain in strategic initiatives; but neighborhood activation work doesn’t exist in an airtight vacuum. Community demands, interests, and tastes shift and evolve, and as they do the plan and strategy should too. And when rain threatens a long-planned event, flexibility wins the day.

### 4. Put local engagement at the heart of programming

Why is this public art installation embraced by neighbors but that evening concert series sparsely attended? Most likely it’s due to the level of connection to the local community at the heart of the program and program partners. Deep and ongoing local engagement is essential.

Additionally, the Zone 3 team encourages partners to refer back to Section 1 of this Guide to review the Zone 3 team’s Four Foundational Principles that have been essential to success: Digital Placemaking, Facilitating Collaborations, Demystifying Transactions, and Retail Readiness have all led to a better and more efficient activation initiative that have also had spillover benefits for the small business and creative enterprise community.



SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

After developing a draft version of this Guide, Graffito along with HUPAD and HRE held workshops with key stakeholders to share the preliminary structure and outline of the Guide and gather immediate feedback. The first round of workshops was held in June 2023 with internal Harvard teams from Common Spaces, Harvard Ed Portal/HPAC, HALC, and the broader members of the Allston Community Activation Network group.

These internal partners and stakeholders offered positive and helpful feedback to the draft outline of the Guide and to key sections that were shared. Highlights of this feedback included the following notes:

- Highlighting common challenges in executing activation programs and the strategies for overcoming them is very valuable, universal, and transferable across Harvard partners, regardless of the spaces they are working in or specific audiences they are targeting
- Staffing notes will be helpful to give people a sober and realistic understanding of the resources it takes to make activation ideas a reality
  - Julie Crites from Common Spaces provided helpful insight into that team’s capacities and capabilities
- There is a concern that third party real estate developers investing in Allston are simply “checking the box” when it comes to activation planning and community engagement; this should be deep work with sincere connections built with the residents of the neighborhood
- With so much new development taking place concurrently, many “community benefit” discussions have overlapped but not always been coordinated. The result may end up being duplicative initiatives, investments, or types of public space delivered by multiple developers.
  - **Question posed:** How can we ensure better coordination both earlier in the process and also later on as activation initiatives get stood up?
- Keeping the momentum and energy going from one activation program to the next can be a challenge for groups with less frequent programming plans

- Zone 3 and other partners in Allston have rightly and successfully focused on building larger, more inclusive platforms for creative expression for the full range of artists, musicians, makers, and other creative entrepreneurs that call Allston home.
  - **Question posed:** How can we expand what public art investment means, from a focus on creating space and showcases for the creative community to investing in the skills, capacity, and development of the creative people themselves (i.e. workforce development for artists and creative entrepreneurs)?

Some of these comments and questions have been incorporated into the final version of the Guide. Other issues that surfaced should provide inspiration for future discussion and planning.



FURTHER ISSUES TO EXPLORE

Based on the discussion held in the preliminary workshops discussed above, several intriguing ideas came up that warrant further study and consideration to help improve cross-partner coordination and stronger promotion of all the activation work happening in Allston broadly.

OPERATIONALIZE REGULAR COMMUNITY CALENDAR UPDATES FROM ACAN GROUP

- Section 2 includes details on how Harvard partners can submit the details of their own public-facing programs to Zone 3 to be included in the Community Events Calendar on the Zone 3 website.
- Collectively, the Zone 3 team, HUPAD, and ACAN group should explore specific processes to operationalize this in a way that makes it a regular, expected, and easy task as part of marketing any new program.

PLAN WESTERN AVE/LOWER ALLSTON “FIRST THURSDAYS” ARTS EVENTS

- Building on the Provost Office’s efforts to hold free arts programming every Thursday, develop a coordinated effort to host art programs and events along the Western Ave corridor and across Lower Allston that are free and open to the public one Thursday each month
- Will put Lower Allston on more people’s mental “arts map” and help the public recognize the high concentration of public art installations, arts organizations, and cultural programming that exists in the neighborhood. Will require a significant level of cross-partner coordination and collaborative marketing
  - Potential role for soon-to-be-hired Senior Manager for Placemaking

ORGANIZE CLEARING HOUSE FOR PROGRAMS IN PLANNING STAGES

- More information sharing about public activation programs has been highlighted as a need and better coordination to post partner programs to the Zone 3 community calendar would help
- However, in order to avoid duplicative programs, events, and other efforts, more information sharing is needed much earlier in program planning stages; it’s helpful to know that there are two similar events taking place within the same time period but it would be better if the two organizing groups had been able to coordinate/communicate to avoid this overlap in ideation phases.
- Developing a tracking tool to serve as a clearing house of programs being developed
  - Potential role for soon-to-be-hired Senior Manager for Placemaking

FULLY COORDINATED GREENWAY PLACEMAKING AND ACTIVATION PLANNING AND EXECUTION

- Consider a more strongly coordinated strategy for planning activation work across all Greenway parcels being developed by third-party developers in order to avoid duplicative efforts, cross-purpose planning, and create management efficiencies
- Funding for efforts could still come from development partners but program planning and execution to be coordinated by single managing entity with similar capacity/capability as Common Spaces or Zone 3/HUPAD Urban District Initiatives team



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The collective work and impact of Zone 3 since 2015 is the result of a large and wide ranging team of partners, stakeholders, and practitioners, both internal and external to Harvard. Graffito would like to acknowledge the following folks for years of deep and coordinated work, unwavering support, and considerable positive influence and inspiration for the full breadth of the Zone 3 initiative:

Office of the Executive Vice President

Meredith Weenik, Executive Vice President

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Harvard University Planning and Design

Marika Reuling, Managing Director, Urban District Initiatives

Willard Donham, Senior Manager for Regulatory Approvals

Harris Band, Senior Advisor

Campus Services

Sean Caron, Vice President for Campus Services

Harvard Real Estate

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Rebeca Galeota, Associate Director, Commercial Leasing & Asset Management

Rebecca Cheney, Commercial Real Estate Associate

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Mark Handley, Director of Government and Community Relations

Brigid O'Rourke, Communications and Media Inquiries

Harvard Ed Portal

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Harvard Ceramics Program

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Harvard Office of General Counsel

Audrey Wang, University Attorney

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Emily Isenberg, Founder & Creative Director

Liz Woodward, Principal & Director of Strategy

Madeline Jacobson, Senior Designer

Anna Ferrari, Design & Marketing Coordinator

Jenny Nguyen Project Coordinator

Stud Green, Senior Account Manager

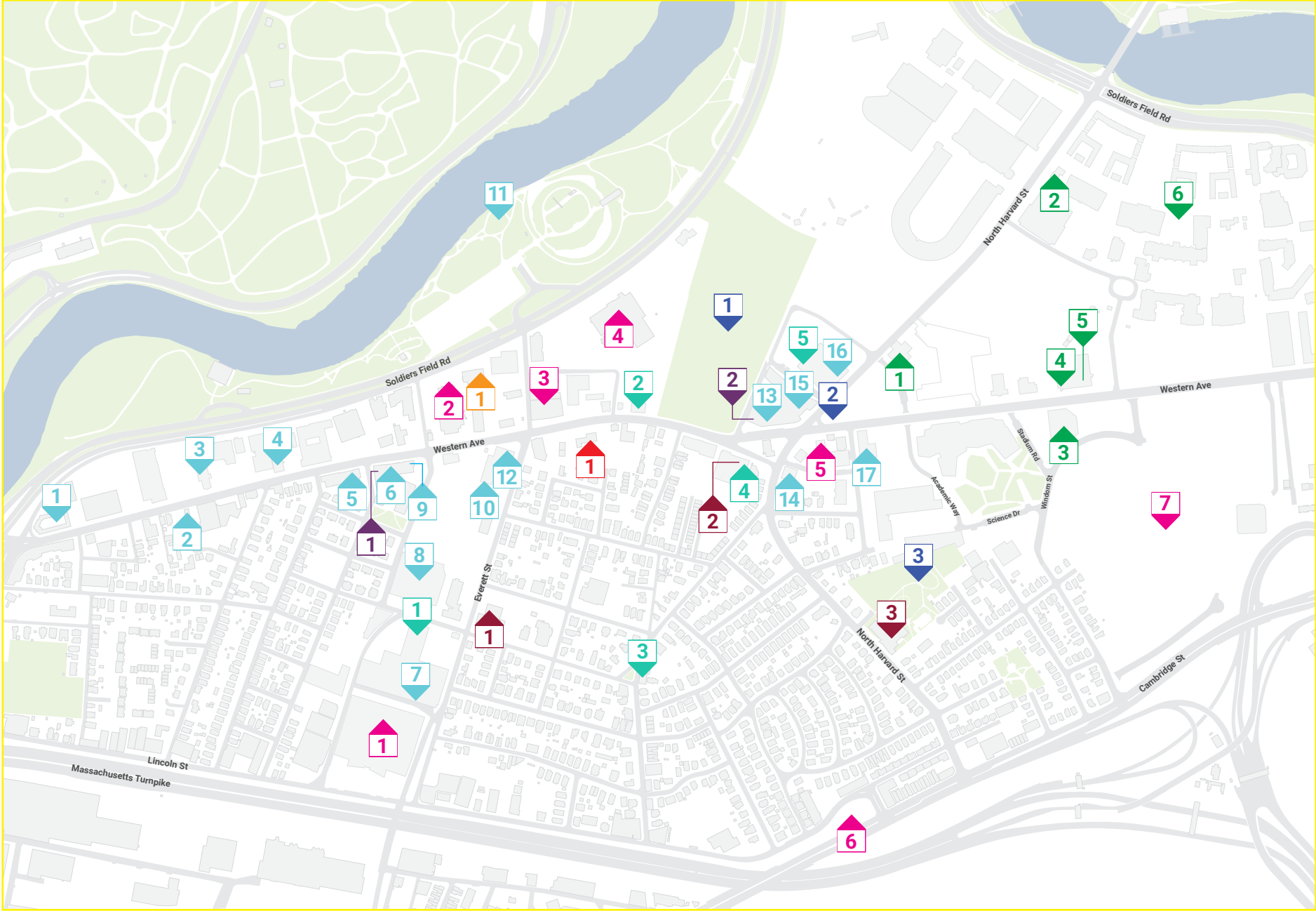


APPENDIX +  
ADDITIONAL READING

- Maps
- Key Resources
- Referenced Documents



NOTEWORTHY NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES & DEVELOPMENT



Academic

1. ArtLab
2. Harvard Athletics
3. SEAS-SEC
4. Harvard LifeLab
5. Harvard iLab
6. Harvard Business School

Arts and Creative Enterprise (ACE)

1. Artisans Asylum
2. Exit Galleries
3. Zone 3
4. Harvard Ceramics
5. Future A.R.T.

Community Education

1. German International School
2. Harvard Ed Portal
3. Honan Allston Library

Hotel

1. Studio Allston Hotel

Office, Lab, Retail

1. NEXUS - King Street

Open Space

1. Smith Field
2. The Grove
3. Library park

Proposed Redevelopment

1. 176 Lincoln St/Berkeley Redevelopment
2. Davis Co. Skating Club Redevelopment
3. 287 Western Ave Redevelopment
4. WBZ Redevelopment
5. 182 Western Ave Redevelopment
6. Common Allbright Apartments
7. ERC Phase 1

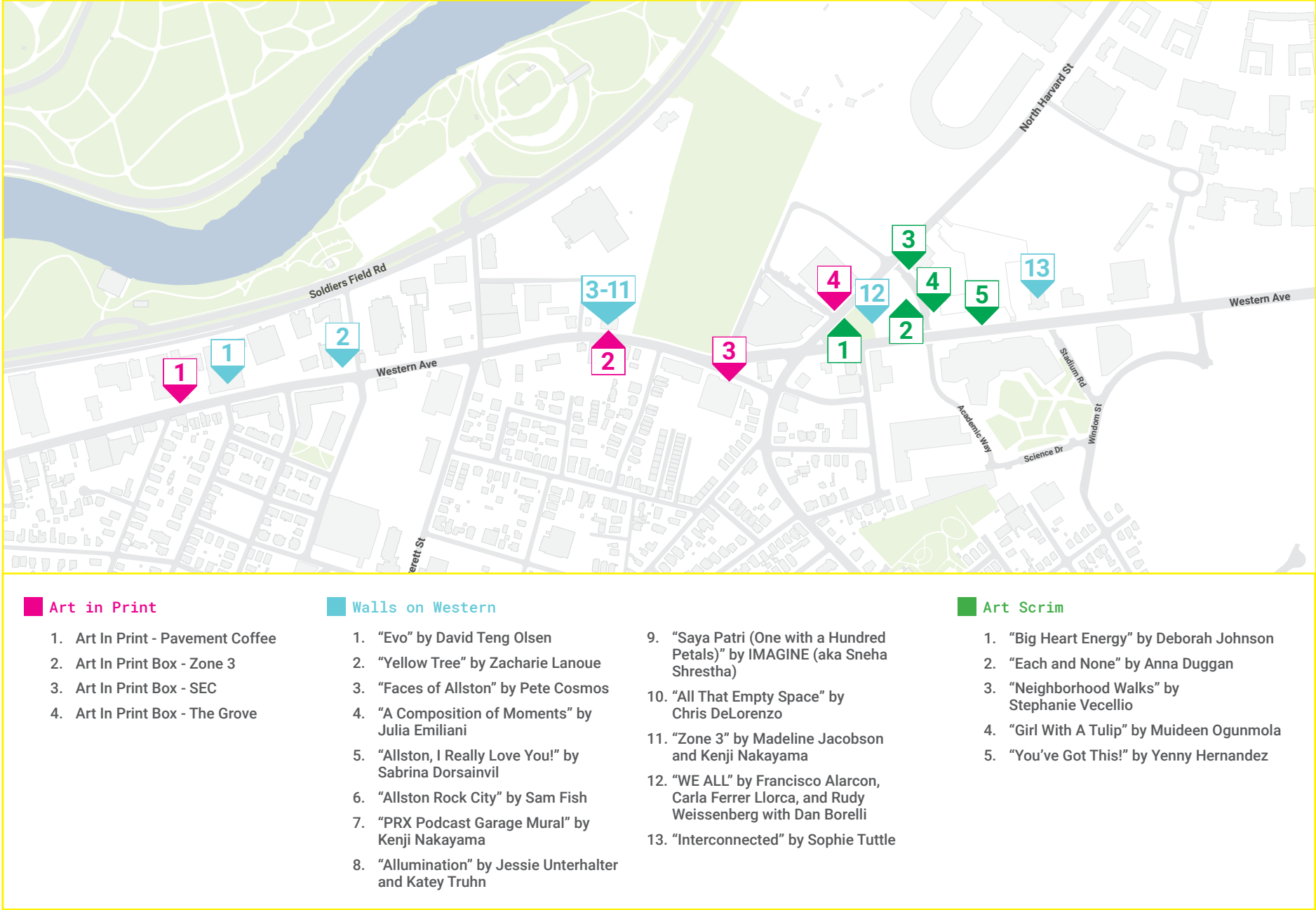
Residential

1. Charlesview Apartments
2. Continuum

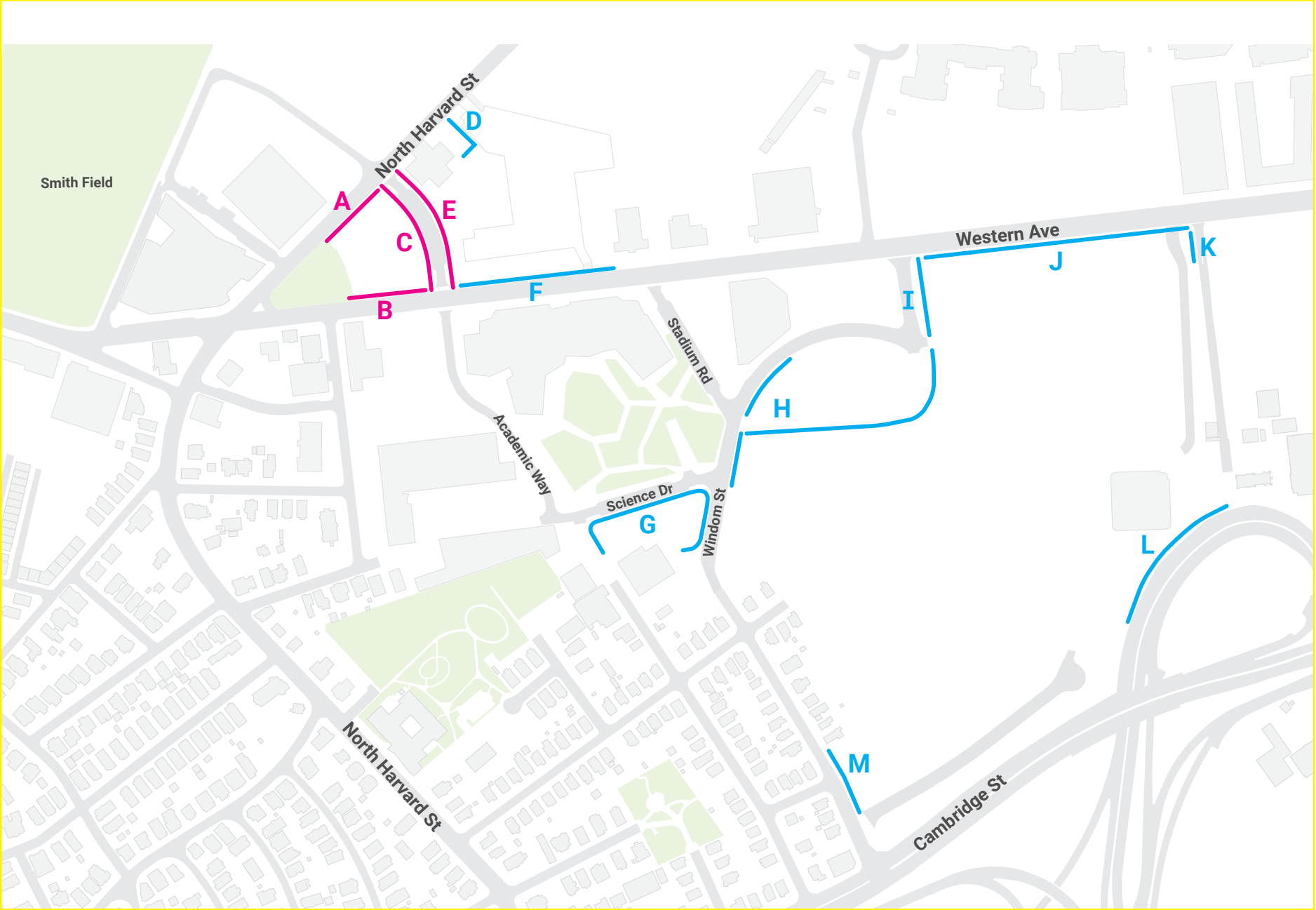
Retail / F+B

1. Charles River Speedway
2. Article 24
3. Mahoney's Garden Center
4. Pavement Coffee
5. Pine Village Daycare
6. Ariana
7. Blackbird Donuts
8. Star Market
9. Perillas
10. Spring Shabu-Shabu
11. Nite Shift Beer Garden
12. Petco
13. Starbucks
14. Sofra Bakery (coming)
15. Trader Joes
16. Sloane's (coming)
17. Swissbakers

ZONE 3 PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION SITES MAP



FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING: POTENTIAL SCRIM ART + MURAL LOCATIONS





2015 HARVARD UNIVERSITY CAMPUS + NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING MAP



FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING: GREENWAY FULL-BUILD





KEY RESOURCES

Visit [graffito.com/zone-3](https://graffito.com/zone-3) for links to the resources listed below:

- [Allston Brighton Arts, Culture and Placekeeping Report, by CivicMoxie on behalf of City of Boston Mayor’s Office of Arts & Culture, 2021](#)  
— [Report Summary](#)
- [Western Avenue Corridor Study & Rezoning Study](#), by the Boston Planning & Redevelopment Authority, City of Boston, 2022
- [Allston Greenway Handbook](#), Prepared By Reed Hilderbrandt on behalf of Harvard University Urban District Initiatives, 2023
- [02134! A Brief History of Neighborhood Development in Allston](#), commissioned by Harvard University, Office of the Executive Vice President, 2016
- [Zone 3 User Guide For 267 Western Ave](#), Graffito SP on behalf of Harvard University, 2023
- [Tactical Urbanist’s Guide to Materials and Design](#), by The Street Plans Collaborative, 2016
- [Non-Retail Active Uses Guide](#), by GraffitoSP, 2023
- [Retail Leasing Roadmap](#), by GraffitoSP, 2023

REFERENCED DOCUMENTS + ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

REFERENCED DOCUMENTS:

- [Sample Program Cards](#)
- [HRE/Zone 3 License Agreement](#)
- [HRE Land/Building “Permission Letter” for permitting](#)
- [Zone 3 Impact Matrix](#)

REFERENCED DOCUMENTS + ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

EVENT REGISTRATION AND DATA COLLECTION – EVENTBRITE

[Eventbrite](#) is an online event ticketing platform that Zone 3 uses to create event listings, set ticket prices (even if free), manage registrations, capture data, and promote events to a wide audience. This tool has several features that can be beneficial for event management and data collection. Eventbrite also offers data analytics and reporting features to help understand event performance. Zone 3 utilizes Eventbrite to collect audience demographic data during registration through custom questions. This information can be used to make informed decisions, improve future events, and measure success against event goals. This data includes zip code, age range, connection to Zone 3, gender, race/nationality

These custom questions are optional for attendees to answer, as it is important to respect any privacy concerns. Zone 3 also notes that these questions are asked to help better serve the Allston/Brighton community, and guide future programming decisions.

- **Attendance expectations:** Event tickets can be capped to match capacity. Typically free tickets have a 50% no-show rate, so keep this in mind when setting your ticket limit.
- **Ticketing Logistics:** Attendees can easily register and receive electronic tickets, while Zone 3 is able to track registrations and send emails through the platform about the upcoming event to attendees.
- **Shared Administrator Access:** New features in eventbrite allow for partners to take on the role of administrator therefore being able to manage attendees within Zone 3’s platforms.
- **Event Promotion and Marketing:** Eventbrite offers various tools to help promote events and reach a wider audience. The platform creates listings with detailed information, add promotional images, optimize for search engines, and customize event links.
- **Event Discovery:** Eventbrite’s large user base and a built-in event discovery feature allows new attendees to discover Zone 3 events based on location, interests, and preferences. This can attract more potential attendees and increase event exposure.
- **Mailing list growth:** Eventbrite registration is also useful to build a strong email mailing list. Anyone that signs up for a ticket is added to the newsletter mailing list, ensuring that each individual will remain tied to Zone 3 messaging and future events through newsletter updates.
- **Feedback requests:** Eventbrite offers event hosts to send feedback surveys to understand what aspects of the event went well, what could be improved, and what the audience would like to see from future programs.





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