

# Renovation Revival: Mechanics Hall

## Executive Summary

Brandon Franks, Christopher Letherbarrow,  
Zachary Shaffer

Sponsor: Worcester County Mechanics Association

Advisor: Professor Katherine Foo

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Worcester today primarily caters to lower educated and skilled jobs such as food service but does also offer opportunity to those of higher education for higher paying jobs as the minority. A social divide currently exists in Worcester and the lower skilled jobs are not sufficient for families similarly to the factory jobs that many possessed in the 1900's [19].

There has been a 9% national decrease in concert attendance, and a 12% decrease in play attendance from 2012 to 2018, while there has been an increase by 6% in attendance to movie theaters in recent times of 2008 to 2012 [11]. The decrease can be accounted for the economic decline of Worcester and the integration of new technology in today's society. Many individuals are opting to choose entertainment outlets that are technology based such as movies, watching television, and listening to music from sources such as their phones.

Although many organizations and industries have been able to benefit and prosper due to emergence of technology in all aspects of society, traditional venues such as performance halls have faced hardships due to this. Mechanics Hall, founded in 1857 in the city of Worcester, Massachusetts, is a venue that is beginning to face the impacts of the social changes of technology. Once as a cornerstone of the Worcester community, Mechanics Hall is an elegant hall that was once the center of technological and cultural advancements upon its establishment. Mechanics Hall is currently hosts a wide variety of events ranging from traditional concert

performances to chef competitions. Due to being static in respect to changes and updates, the hall is failing to compete with its competitors within the entertainment industry.

### **Methodology:**

This project sought to evaluate the current technological and operational systems that exist in Mechanics Hall in order to assist the Worcester County Mechanics Association in developing preliminary plans regarding potential upgrades and renovations of these systems. To ensure clients and visitors experience satisfactory events at Mechanics Hall, this project had three major component objectives:

- Determine which aspects of the current signage, timekeeping, and donor management are outdated
- Determine which renovations are to be made, and a timeline for completion of these renovations
- Attract youth and young adults to Mechanics Hall events by developing a larger understanding of their entertainment interests in regards to performance halls

For the majority of the field work for our project, we worked with the staff within Mechanics Hall to gain an understanding of the inefficiencies of the systems that our team focused our work on: signage, timekeeping, donor management, and youth outreach. Below we detail the methods we used to accomplish our objectives.

To achieve our objectives, our team conducted interviews with our sponsor, staff members, and directors and professionals in either youth or music fields. The interviews provided framework to what works, doesn't work, equipment and systems that can be feasibly updated, and advice for updates and changes. We also conducted additional research to obtain an understanding of what options and possibilities are available for each of the areas we addressed. Finally, we conducted a survey with the students of Bartlett High School to obtain information and suggestions regarding the connection of technology and music and interests that youth may have for a place such as Mechanics Hall. Our deliverable to Mechanics Hall was a social plan to best engage the youth of Worcester, a bid package for signage updates, and suggestions for new software to enhance the donor management and timekeeping systems.

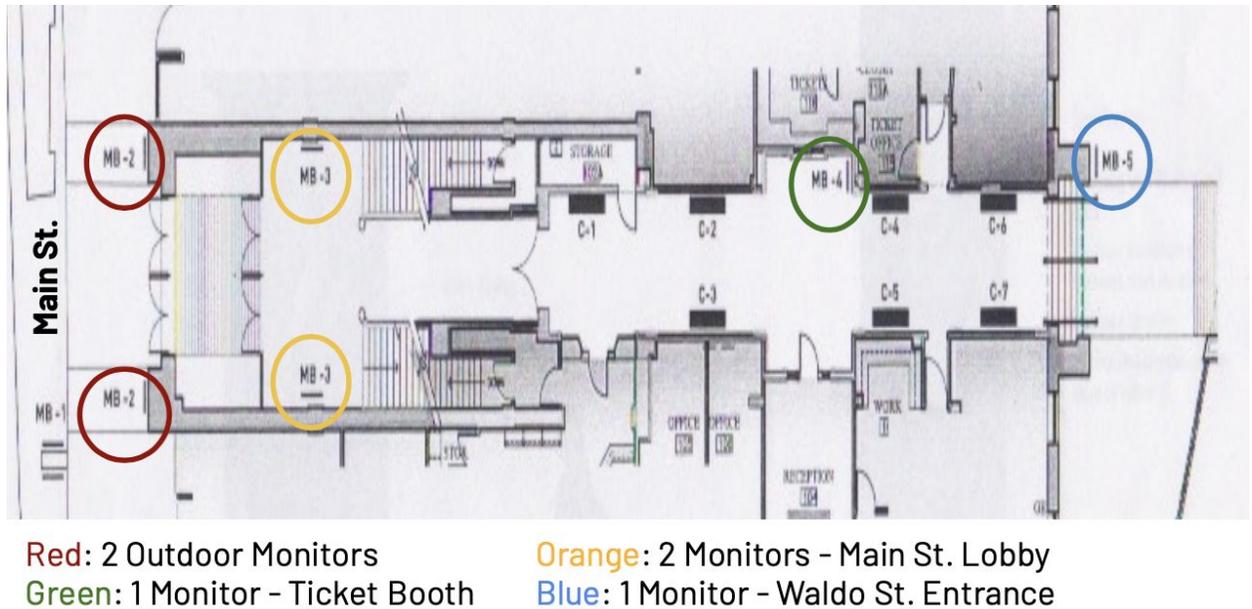
### **Findings:**

From the various methods and research we have done to help Mechanics Hall, we identified numerous findings that allowed us to deduce relevant and useful recommendations for the hall. The following is an outline of our findings.

1.) Mechanics Hall is eager to update signage immediately.

we have proposed updates for the signage that provide information regarding ongoing and upcoming events, navigation throughout Mechanics Hall, community involvement, and advertisements. The proposed package offers a range of options that would cost Mechanics Hall between \$15,000-\$17,000, depending on their choice of renovations. The package entails two commercial grade outdoor monitors that would replace the existing signage that is located on the facade of the building at the Main Street Entrance, two monitors would be located in the Main Street Entrance Lobby at the bottom of each staircase, one at the Waldo Street Entrance Lobby, and one at the Ticket booth.

Figure 1: Plan View of Updates



2.) Mechanics would like long term renovations to updates their signage in addition to the immediate updates.

For the long term signage, our team has proposed updates for exit and supplementary signage, additional interior digital displays, and lighting updates within a 3, 5, and 10 year timeline.

Figure 2: Long term updates



3.) T-Sheets by Quickbooks will address their timekeeping concerns.

The TSheets system had several features that made it the more attractive software suite. The ease of use, mostly due to TSheets' simplified layouts of its features, more graphical representations of employee hours, and the ability to incorporate custom payment rates for different periods beyond a basic time-and-a-half overtime were three features that made TSheets the more attractive option. Additionally, on the employee use side, the Kiosk feature allowed for a simplified clock in and out system.

4.) Bloomerang is our leading candidate to address their donor management inefficiencies.

Our team concluded that Bloomerang is the superior candidate for a number of reasons: it does not possess an additional start up fee, the “Smart Reports” feature for easily accessible representation of data, and it allows the automatic and easy transfer of data. Bloomerang abolishes all possibilities of error that could result from manually entering data

5.) We have a developed a plan and steps to engage a younger audience.

After our many interviews, the survey, and To engage a younger audience, we have addressed three areas that can be updated and reconfigured that will best engage a younger audience.

- New Events and Performances
- Reconfiguring the Scheduling
- Updating their Social Media Presence