



Creative District

Where Creativity & Innovation Thrive

What is the Creative District?

The Creative District in Downtown Olympia is home to over 150 creative enterprises such as theaters, galleries, breweries, professional artists and designers. Together they form an energetic hub for creative connection and reflect Olympia's unique character.

This designation is a vehicle to concentrate support for artists and creative innovators, expanding their impact and helping to make Olympia a place where artists and creators can thrive.

Current art, social and cultural venues represent a variety of arts-inspired industries: from bedding to beer and cabinetry to costuming. Creative jobs, strengthening our arts community and attracting fresh thinkers are just a few of the many benefits of the designated Creative District.

2023 Olympia Creative District Happenings

Arts Walk

Thousands gather downtown for a celebration of the arts twice-yearly in the Spring and Fall, featuring live music, visual arts, artist markets, & performances.

Painted Crosswalks

Rainbow crosswalks painted at 5th and Washington and at Olympia Ave and Columbia celebrate PRIDE throughout the year.

Street and Alley Lighting

Street blocks and alleys in the creative district are lit with festival lights to provide a whimsical experience in previously dark areas.

New Murals

In partnership with the Olympia Downtown Alliance, the PBIA is installing two new murals in downtown Olympia this summer and restoring murals damaged by graffiti.

Love Oly Summerfest

Hosted by the Olympia Downtown Alliance, this three-day event features live music and performances, interactive art installations from local artists, activities for kids and families, and a beer garden.

Sweet 16 All Styles Battle

A regional street dance tournament for youth and young adults sponsored by the Bridge Music Project in July.

Hispanic Festival

This community celebration in September during Hispanic Heritage Month includes performances, vendors and food.

Washington Center for Performing Arts

Reopening: \$8.8m project to improve technical systems, backstage, theatre seating, concessions and more.

State Theater/Harlequin Productions, Capital Theater, and Olympia Family Theater Improvements

Capital improvements at the State Theater/ Harlequin, Capital Theater and Olympia Family Theater underway to improve ADA compliance and improve the theater experience. Funding includes \$300k from the City of Olympia to assist with economic recovery and bolster low-income accessibility programs.

2020 Snapshot

150+ Creative Industries

42 Historic Buildings

38 Food Businesses

25 Makers & Fabricators

10 Performance/Event Spaces

Indie Music Project Implementation

A project of the Olympia Heritage Commission is using oral history to explore the locations, ideas and influences of Olympia's independent music scene from the 1980's to early 2000's.

Artesian Night Market

The City-owned public space near the Artesian Well will be transformed into a creative event space. Planning process starts in late 2023.

Love Oly Winterfest

Hosted by the Olympia Downtown Alliance, this street festival features live music, family friendly activities and holiday cheer.

Makers Markets

The PBIA business board will coordinate and promote a series of makers markets throughout downtown between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

Wayfinding

As part of developing a citywide wayfinding strategy, the City will explore Creative District wayfinding for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists alike.



Olympia’s Creative District Additional Features

Arbutus Folk School

Offers year-round classes, workshops, resources, events, and artist residencies with a focus on ceramics, music, woodworking, blacksmithing, fiber arts, and folk & traditional arts.

Hands on Children’s Museum and the LOTT WET Science Center

Stimulates curiosity, creativity and learning through fun, interactive exhibits and programs for children, families and school groups.

Independent businesses

These include bookstores, music shops, independent boutiques, artisans and art galleries.

Public Art

An impressive collection of public art, including sculptures, murals, traffic box wraps, mosaics and street treatments.

In the Glow of the District

Just outside the boundaries of the Creative District, these nearby initiatives and features also contribute to the creative culture and economy of the District.

Armory Creative Campus

The City acquired this 50,000 sq. ft. facility on the edge of downtown in 2022. Business planning and initial partner selection are underway. The Campus will provide space, programs and activities to support Olympia’s artistic, collaborative, and entrepreneurial spirit.

Activation of Historic City Hall

The City will soon identify a tenant for this iconic building located at 108 State Ave downtown with the intent to reinvigorate a key crossroads between the Creative District, the Farmers Market, the downtown retail core and the historic waterfront.

Hummingbird Art Studio

In partnership with the Evergreen State College and City of Olympia, this art studio which serves people with disabilities will return to downtown, housed in the historic Ben Moore’s building on 4th Avenue.

Art in Olympia Storefronts.

This ongoing project of the Olympia Artspace Alliance creates a series of temporary art installations in vacant storefront windows within downtown.

Retail Pop-Up Program

Temporary tenanting of high visibility vacant space in the Downtown core with emerging entrepreneurs. Administered by the Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA).

Placemaking Microgrant Program

ODA will provide \$500 “microgrants” for small businesses to invest in small placemaking projects, such as planters, lighting, signage or promotional events.

Music in the Park

This popular outdoor, free concert series brings some of the best northwest musical talent downtown in the summers.

Olympia Farmer’s Market

Washington’s second largest market features live music, handmade crafts, food and local produce, April-October, Thurs-Sun, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

South Sound Block Party

Two days of music, food, fun, and community at the Port of Olympia supports local working musicians and the production community.

