

2024-2025 Creative District Goals

Partnership with the Olympia Artspace Alliance

To support OAA in growing their organizational capacity, move the Creative District Strategic Plan forward, and practice shifting management of the Creative District away from the City and toward the Community, the City of Olympia has contracted with OAA to advance several strategic goals—with City funding and support—in 2024. These goals connect back to the broader Strategic Plan and include:

- **Ensure Ongoing Arts Programming:** OAA will continue supporting the Creative District through various programs such as Art in Olympia Storefronts, murals, space grants, artist mingles, and meet-up events, focusing on defining, promoting, and branding the Downtown Olympia Creative district.
- **Inventory and Data Collection:** Develop a Downtown Olympia Creative District Directory identifying creative enterprises within the district boundary through direct contact and correspondence, as well as other sources including the City of Olympia, Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA), and other partners.
- **Continuous Outreach and Community Building:** Compile and share resources for artists and creatives, including support programs, grants, financial opportunities, and educational partnerships. Plan events for networking and outreach, promoting cross-promotion and social media exposure.
- **Building Brand Identity:** Develop a branding process for the Creative District, including creation of a logo, signage, asset usage guidelines, and key messaging, aligning with the Creative District Strategic Plan's goals of community building, artist support, promotions, advocacy for affordable space, and equitable access.

Artesian Light Market

The City has earmarked funding and received an ArtsWA grant to support transforming the former “Artesian Commons” in the central corridor of our Creative District into a “Light Market” in support of the Creative District economy. Beginning with critical site improvements in 2024 focused especially on lighting, our goal is to move toward full activation of this space in 2025 in support of overarching Creative District goals for Space and Access.

Boundary Adjustments and the Armory

While the Armory Creative Campus is currently considered just outside or “in the glow” of the Downtown Olympia Creative District, it will become a key Creative District asset through future boundary adjustments. This 50,000 sq. ft. facility on the edge of downtown will provide space, programs and activities to support Olympia’s artistic, collaborative, and entrepreneurial spirit. Eight anchor tenants have been selected, and construction to prepare the site for use will commence in 2024.

Music

Music is a key element of Olympia’s creative economy, culture, and history, and this is reflected in two of our 2024-2025 Creative District goals.

- **The Olympia Music Project**—a project that began with a focus on Indie Music History under the guidance of the Olympia Heritage Commission—is an oral history effort to explore the locations, ideas, and influences of Olympia’s music scene. Phase one focused on the independent music scene from the 1980’s to early 2000’s. Phase two of this project will expand the timeline and develop a digital repository that belongs to and

is maintained by the community. It is underway in 2024 with leadership from a new local nonprofit formed just for this purpose.

- **Music City** conversation, strategy development, and policy review. In March of 2024, Music City expert Shain Shapiro joined our community for a Creative District conversation on supporting music in policy and planning efforts. Determining capacity to develop a music-specific strategy, fostering follow-up conversations with our music community, and internal policy review based on the initial conversation will occur through 2024-2025.

Summary of Key 5-Year Goals

2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with Olympia Artspace Alliance (programming, data collection, Creative Community Directory database development, outreach and community building, and branding/identity work) • Artesian “Light Market” site improvements and RFP development for operations • Creative District boundary adjustment • Armory Creative Campus construction and exploration of CD boundary adjustment. • Olympia Music History Project Phase 2 • Music City strategy exploration. • Exploration of Local Arts Agency (LAA) capacity building, development, or formation alongside key partners, such as OAA. • Continue investing in entrepreneurship development, specifically for our local creative economy and those within the Creative District. • Continue investing in marketing and promotions of Creative District businesses via contract with Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA) • Research and identify best effort for wayfinding (kiosks, sidewalk decals, crosswalk art, street signage, augmented reality map, etc.) • Develop criteria for information on signage and wayfinding assets. • Grow pop-up galleries and installations, utilizing vacant spaces and storefronts for public display, artist exposure and potential sales by inventorying vacant spaces, growing relationships with property owners, and working with artists and property owners to develop agreeable frameworks and relationships to utilize vacant space. • Advocate for accessibility in public spaces—identify and review publicly accessible spaces for ADA+, including individuals who will use accommodations as part of this process. • <i>Rainbow Pride Flag Crosswalk Commemoration</i> • <i>Pan African Flag Crosswalk Commemoration (in conjunction with Juneteenth Celebration)</i> • <i>Cultural Events Program hosts, sponsors, or co-hosts Black History Month Celebration; Juneteenth Festival, Asian America, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islanders Heritage Festival; Lula Fest (Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration); Indigenous Peoples’ Day Celebration; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Capital City Pride; and Latinx Youth Summit</i>
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2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue identifying opportunities to transition leadership and investing in the capacity of OAA and/or other partner organizations as the City seeks to move into a support role. • Armory Creative Campus activation • Branding/identity development and implementation • Wayfinding for Creative District alongside broader City wayfinding efforts • Identify policy goals to support creatives and incentivize the addition of affordable work and live spaces in downtown (e.g. parking relief for loading and unloading at shows; revised regulations for redevelopment). • Artesian Light Market in operation • Strategize best geographic areas within Creative District for signage. • Develop Creative Community Directory, publish information to relevant website, and promote directory across Creative District partners' social media and platforms • Develop inventory of local professionals in the marketing and branding disciplines—both to support future Creative District promotions and to support individual creative enterprises within district boundaries. • Assist in transition of existing underutilized and affordable real estate to working arts space—identifying properties with opportunity to be converted into arts space and identifying potential incentives to assist with redevelopment. • Advocate for accessibility in public spaces—developing and maintaining relationships with property owners and managers to identify upgrade and retrofitting priorities. • Gather and confirm interest from partners and arts community organizations to gauge interest in “Community Showcase” events series • Work with artists and creatives to identify and address gaps in available resources for entrepreneurship development. • Work with various agencies to build relationships and develop proposals for funding opportunities. • Advocate for affordable housing for creatives—work with stakeholders to develop policy positions regarding housing affordability for creatives. • Identify and catalogue gaps in existing music venues as part of the Music City strategy conversations and exploration. • <i>Cultural Events Program hosts, sponsors, or co-hosts Black History Month Celebration; Juneteenth Festival, Asian America, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islanders Heritage Festival; Lula Fest (Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration); Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Capital City Pride; and Latinx Youth Summit</i>
2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue identifying opportunities to transition leadership and investing in the capacity of OAA and/or other partner organizations as the City seeks to move into a support role. • Advocate for policy changes, including code requirements, that support affordable art space, music venues, market opportunities, and more • Build on Music City strategy explorations to identify policy and infrastructure improvements that will make it possible to add music venue capacity to the Creative District. As part of this work, audit all existing venues in the Creative District and consider non-traditional venues that may be new opportunities for live music such as restaurants and retailers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders to develop and overarching marketing strategy for the Creative District, focusing attention on exposure for District artists, creatives, and events. • Develop framework for Creative District “Community Showcase” events series for them to be turnkey for interested parties. • Deepen and develop partnerships and relationships with educational partners/resources to understand existing and grow potential learning opportunities for all interested creatives within the Creative District. • Increase reach to communicate funding opportunities to creatives and the artistic community in the Creative District. • Advocate for affordable housing for creatives—monitor changes to Olympia Municipal Code and upcoming local and State budgets and legislation. • Continue advocating for accessibility in public spaces—participating in ongoing efforts to receive, review, and address barriers or issues of access. • Ensure equitable access to training and resources, working with community partners to identify opportunities for free resources, scholarships, and sliding scale support. • Design and install signage or other wayfinding assets downtown identifying Creative District. • Connect artists and creatives with local marketing and branding professionals based on the services and type of assistance required. • <i>Cultural Events Program hosts, sponsors, or co-hosts Black History Month Celebration; Juneteenth Festival, Asian America, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islanders Heritage Festival; Lula Fest (Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration); Indigenous Peoples’ Day Celebration; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Capital City Pride; and Latinx Youth Summit</i>
2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue identifying opportunities to transition leadership and investing in the capacity of OAA and/or other partner organizations as the City seeks to move into a support role. • Schedule Creative District “Community Showcase” events, organize and manage information into a working calendar that can be published and visible to the community and promoted by all Creative District Partners. • Package existing community training and educational resources, along with potential newly emerging resources, into a more comprehensive source of information for Creative District creatives. • Continue advocating for affordable housing for creatives using framework of adopted policy position. • Execute overarching Creative District marketing strategy. • Develop an overarching Music City strategy, based on previous years’ explorations, that will support retaining existing venues, recruit new venues, and add opportunity. • Continue advocating for accessibility in public spaces—participating in ongoing efforts to receive, review, and address barriers or issues of access; including ensuring opportunities for people who use accommodations to request changes and record/report problems. • Support equitable and accessible gatherings, working with communities to build trust and identify gaps in access and outreach in the creative district, and working with local cultural organizations to promote and inform all community members about Creative District opportunities and happenings.

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2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete handoff of Creative District leadership to LAA, OAA, or other community-based partner as the City of Olympia transitions into a support and funding role • Continue acting as a liaison at Creative District "Community Showcase" events, supporting artists and arts organizations, and promoting Creative District information, activities, and opportunities. • Serve as a liaison to connect artists and creatives to entrepreneurial resources, educational opportunities, funding, and other supports. • Continue advocating for affordable housing for creatives, building on continuous feedback, monitoring, and updating framework of adopted policy position. • Continue advocating for accessibility in public spaces—participating in ongoing efforts to receive, review, and address barriers or issues of access; including ensuring opportunities for people who use accommodations to request changes and record/report problems. • <i>Cultural Events Program hosts, sponsors, or co-hosts Black History Month Celebration; Juneteenth Festival, Asian America, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islanders Heritage Festival; Lula Fest (Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration); Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Capital City Pride; and Latinx Youth Summit</i>