

Strategic Plan for the Long Beach Creative District

Fostering Cultural Growth and Economic Vitality

Long Beach, Washington, offers a unique opportunity to establish a Creative District that celebrates the region's rich cultural heritage, artistic talent, and natural beauty. Positioned as a hub for creativity, this district will aim to drive economic growth, strengthen community ties, and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Vision Statement

A place where music drifts out from the restaurants and is heard coming from the parks as you move up and down the streets; where art galleries intermingle with retail boutiques, bakeries, restaurants featuring many cuisines, authors, crafters, and museums; where the streetscape includes public art, pocket parks for relaxing and watching the people come and go; and where creative individuals are welcomed and encouraged.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Boost Economic Development

- Encourage local businesses to collaborate with artists and cultural organizations.
- Develop additional programs that attract tourists, such as art festivals, workshops, and exhibitions.
- Provide incentives and mechanisms for creative entrepreneurs to set up studios and galleries within the district.

Goal 2: Clarify the Creative Identity of the District

- Develop a cohesive brand identity for the Creative District that emphasizes its unique offerings. Leverage social media, local publications, cable television, and partnerships with the Tourism Bureau to promote the District.

Goal 3: Strengthen Community Connections

- Engage residents in planning and decision-making processes for the district.
- Foster intergenerational programs that connect younger and older community members through shared creative activities.
- Build partnerships with schools and educational institutions to integrate arts education into curricula.

Goal 4: Preserve and Honor Local Heritage

- Highlight Long Beach's cultural history
- Collaborate with Indigenous communities to ensure their voices and traditions are represented in the district.
- Restore and adapt historic buildings within the district as spaces for creative use.

Strategies

Strategies in Support of Goal 1: Economic Development

Invest in programs and physical spaces that support creativity and community engagement, such as galleries, outdoor performance venues, and maker spaces, and create programs for the development and encouragement of the creative workforce.

- Economic impact implementation from the Pacific County Economic Development Council. Pacific County Economic Development Council will partner with the City and local artists to promote and advance the creative economy. The Council will identify needs for combined studio and gallery space, as well as designated housing for creatives.
- Facility and planning support from the City of Long Beach including zoning and physical space inventories.
- Pursue additional funding through City and County Lodging Tax (LTAC) grants, donations, vendor fees charged at events initiated by or sponsored by the District.
 - Both the Long Beach Merchants and the Peninsula Artisans Association have long histories of successfully obtaining grants from local funding sources based on years of making positive contributions to the economy of the City and County. The Creative District designation provides another avenue for these funds, and clarifies the distinction between District funds and others.
- Set first-year and ongoing annual budgets.
- Identify suitable properties for maker spaces and live/work places; exploring funding options (grants, a public/private partnership with the City, a private developer).
- Coordinate with local businesses and the high school on establishing internships and mentorships leading to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities within the creative economy.
- Support local artists through grants, residencies, and exhibition opportunities.
- Develop plans for the year-round use of the upcoming Market Building in Veterans Field to support the creative community.

Strategies in Support of Goal 2: Clarifying the Creative Identity of the District

Activities that reinforce and expand the unique set of attributes making up the Long Beach Creative District in coordination with unified marketing, branding, and promotion.

- Create additional public art installations that reflect the unique character and history of Long Beach and develop permanent and pop-up studio/gallery spaces.
- Expand the calendar of events celebrating diverse forms of creative expression, including visual arts, music, dance, and theater from the current mostly-seasonal offerings to year-round.

- Include the creative entrepreneurial business spotlights from the EDC website.
 - Highlight the distillery, brewery and cidery through the EDC Craft Beverage Trail.
 - Outline the culinary history of the Peninsula with the Depot, Shoalwater, Ark, Seafood and Razor Clam Festival, Garlic Festival, etc.
 - Feature our creative pioneers, such as Elton Bennet, Charles Mulvey, Eric Wiegart, and Don Nisbet and newer entries such as Raven’s Ridge clothing designer, Rita Brown, fabric artists such as Sahar (Quilter), musicians, and the artists found at the Bold Gallery, and local authors.
- Work with the Pacific County Tourism Bureau to develop a consistent set of graphic standards that will encompass the District and the wider area.

Strategies in Support of Goal 3: Strengthening Community Connections

Collaborate with regional organizations, businesses, and government entities to secure funding and resources. Expand advisory boards to include more artists, community leaders, and stakeholders.

- Specific projects may include, but are not limited to:
 - Further support local Pride organizations and events.
 - Involve Pacific County Immigrant Services on the steering committee.
 - Support the creation of a Juneteenth celebration.
- Select members of the Governing Board and Steering Committee to have specific, unique connections across the entire community. Some specific communities to be included:
 - The neurodivergent and LGBTQ+ communities through personal contacts, work with PRIDE, and Facebook groups for these communities, “Better Together, Long Beach Peninsula POC, LGBTQ+ and Allies.”
 - The Chinook Tribe.
 - The Hispanic community, several of whom are represented on our Facebook group.
- Ensure that all events and activities are promoted to the older and lower-income communities through the Peninsula Senior Activity Center, Peninsula Poverty Response, the Peninsula Players theater group, the Peninsula Arts Center, the BOLD Gallery, the Long Beach Merchants Association, and others as the occasions arise.

Strategies in Support of Goal 4: Preserving and Honoring Local Heritage

Identify opportunities to reference the cultural, historic, and environmental heritage of the area.

- Film festival including Tribal cinematic productions such as “Voice of the Tides”, “Guardians of the River by Amarin White”, “Wrecked: Sinking ships and colliding cultures on the Northwest Coast”, etc.
- Culture fair(s) celebrating the Finnish, Chinook, Hawaiian, and Hispanic cultures predominant in Long Beach through art, music, dance, cuisine, and student projects.
- Create dedicated museum displays.
- Acknowledge the role of York and Sakakawea in the Lewis and Clark story through new public art.
- Storytellers, re-enactors, folk singers, and other historically oriented performers on the stage at the town’s central intersection.
- Contests for songwriting, literary arts, visual arts and more with themes tying into local heritage.

Implementation Timeline

Phase 0: Recruit Steering Committee (pre-Designation)

The Steering Committee for the District currently includes the governing board and representatives from our creative enterprises:

Governing Board

Board Chair

Wm. Svendsen, Ph.D., Long Beach Merchants Association Treasurer, World Kite Museum Board Member, Long Beach Peninsula Acoustic Music Foundation Executive Director, Peninsula Arts Center co-owner

Economic and Workforce Development

Sue Yirku, Pacific County Economic Development Council Director

Economic and Workforce Development

Liaison with City, Artisans Association, Chinook Tribe, other governmental agencies

Sue Svendsen, City of Long Beach Mayor, watercolor artist, Peninsula Arts Center co-owner

Marketing and Promotion

Josh Phillips, Pacific County Tourism Bureau Executive Director

Marketing and Promotion

Creative Enterprise Representatives

Daneka Ewert, Bold Gallery Owner

Liaison with artist community, LGBTQ+

Jason Sheaux, Musician

Representing area musicians

Breanda Sharkey, Peninsula Artisans Association President, Painter

Liaison with visual arts community

H.E. Wallace, Author

Liaison with literary community

Rita Smith, Actor/Director, Peninsula Players

Liaison with theater community

Phase 1A: Governance Framework (Months 0–1)

The designated staff liaison role for the Creative District will ensure the successful integration of Creative District activities into the annual work plan for the Merchants Association, the City of Long Beach, and the activities of the Pacific County Economic Development Council and the Pacific County Tourism Bureau. The key responsibilities of this position include:

- **Community Engagement:** The liaison will oversee engagement with the community to promote Creative District activities and gather feedback. This includes organizing events, workshops,

and meetings to involve community members in the planning and execution of District initiatives.

- **Partnership Development:** The liaison will establish and maintain partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and stakeholders. These partnerships will leverage resources, maintain support, and ensure the sustainability of the District.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** The liaison will monitor the progress of Creative District activities and report on their impact. This includes tracking key performance indicators, evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives, and providing regular updates to stakeholders.
- **Resource Management:** The liaison will manage resources such as funding, volunteers, and materials, to support District activities. This includes budgeting, securing grants, and ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively.

It's anticipated that the liaison will spend twenty to forty hours per month on these activities, depending on the seasonal aspects of our coastal economy and the scheduling of the regular festivals and events.

As the liaison's time will vary, above, so will the hours devoted to Creative District activities by our two employees, the Welcome Center Manager and the Volunteer Coordinator. We are initially budgeting one-quarter of each employee's time to be spent on District activities. This will be reviewed on a regular basis and adjusted as needed.

Phase 1B: Planning and Stakeholder Engagement (Months 1–6)

- Create a unifying graphic standard/design theme for the District.
- Design a community-wide event to announce the designation of the District.
- Develop a detailed project plan and secure initial funding.

Phase 2: Infrastructure and Program Development (Months 7–18)

- Design and implement visual identification of the physical boundaries of the Creative District.
- Prepare construction and contract documents for the Market Building in Veterans Field.
- Launch pilot programs, such as art workshops, tours, or public performances.

Phase 3: Marketing and Growth (Months 19–36)

- Establish connections with neighboring communities to identify mutual benefits.
- Expand partnerships and sponsorships with local businesses to sustain growth.
- Evaluate the success of programs and make adjustments based on community feedback.

Phase 4: Building Out the Infrastructure (Months 37–on)

- Identify and secure physical locations suited for maker space(s) and live/work facilities.
- Work with WWest and Adrift Hospitality on a film studio, multi-use theater, and conference center.
- Coordinate with City and County planning departments to facilitate any needed conditional uses and/or zoning.
- Secure funding for initial pilot projects through B&O revenues, LTAC, state or federal grants, and private/public partnerships.

Metrics for Success

- Increase in foot traffic and tourism revenue within the district.
- Growth in the number of creative businesses and artist residencies.
- Positive feedback from community surveys regarding quality of life improvements.

Conclusion

The establishment of a Creative District in Long Beach, Washington, represents a transformative initiative that will celebrate the town's unique attributes while fostering innovation, community engagement, and economic prosperity. By cultivating a vibrant environment where art and culture thrive, Long Beach can become a model for creative placemaking and a destination for inspiration and connection.