

completing

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# BELRED ARTS DISTRICT

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN  
2022-2027

*Nails* by Christian Moeller

EasTrail, BelRed



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PREPARED BY  
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COMMISSIONED BY:



City of Bellevue  
Cultural & Economic  
Development

# Land Acknowledgment

The land this plan is focused on is part of the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish people, the traditional home of all tribes and bands within the Duwamish and Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. We take this opportunity to honor and express our deepest respect to the original caretakers of this land; a people that are still here, continuing to honor their heritage.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BelRed has the highest concentration of arts and cultural businesses, organizations and artists in Bellevue by far. This community is at an inflection point with many worried about rising costs and loss of existing spaces from new development. How can Bellevue be the cultural heart of the Eastside without BelRed?



This plan builds off of past work to establish the BelRed Arts District. It adopts a position that in order for the BelRed Arts District to be meaningful, it can't stay as it is, it has to see a critical mass of creative growth.

To achieve that, strategies in this plan harness arts and creative potential, the built environment, programs, and human and institutional capital.

**Who is the plan for?** The arts community plus a partner-network of developers, current and future leaders, city government, regional partners, stakeholder corporations and more to assist with implementation.

**What does it do?** It creates an opportunistic action-oriented road map to spark critical mass creative growth in the BelRed Arts District.

**Where is the Arts District?** The BelRed Arts District is in BelRed in the area surrounding the Francia Russell Center near the 130th light rail station. An exact boundary will need to be established during implementation of this plan.

**When is it targeted to start and finish?**

It's already started! Select action items are already underway. This plan is a starting point that covers recommended actions through 2027.

**Why is the district important?** The district includes the highest concentration of arts, creative and cultural uses on the east side of Lake Washington. Without the benefits that a district can provide, Bellevue may lose this important economic and cultural constituency for good.

**How does the plan work?** By centering strategies on core elements for establishing the district with associated action items that can be realistically implemented.

# Critical Mass Creative Growth in the Arts District

Recognizing the accelerating connections between economic and cultural development, this plan is intended to be a road map for critical mass creative growth in the BelRed Arts District. Focus areas, strategies and action items should have wide positive economic and cultural impacts on the regional creative and economic ecosystem strengthening Bellevue's important role within it.

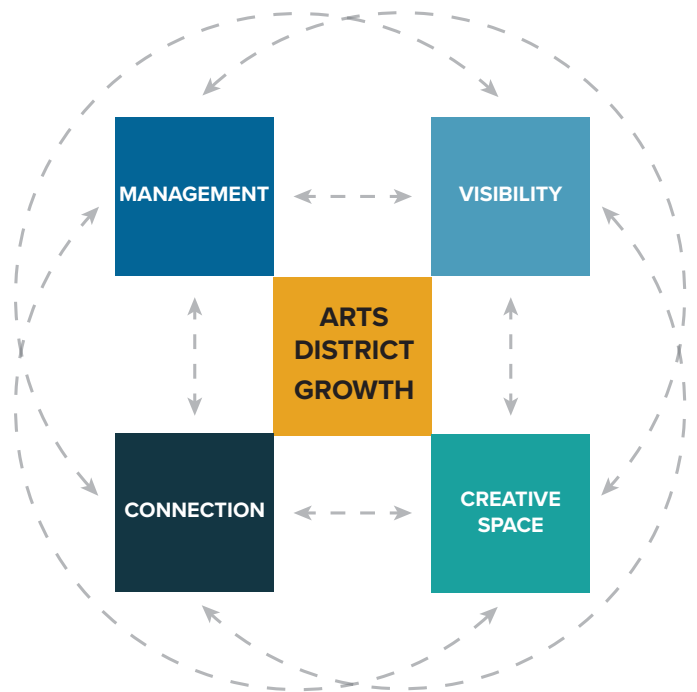


**Critical Mass Creative Growth:** The idea that cultural development spurs greater economic development and vice versa.

## Four Strategic Areas For Critical Mass Creative Growth

The plan identifies the following focus areas. Each focus area supports and connects with other focus areas to achieve growth of the Arts District.

- 1. Management** - The district has an active and formal managing body.
- 2. Visibility** - The district is recognizable.
- 3. Creative Space** - New creative spaces are being built and existing ones remain available and affordable.
- 4. Connection** - The district is seen as a place to come together, innovate and experience art, culture and creativity.



## Management Strategy

Management of the district is essential to further establishment of the BelRed Arts District. While the City of Bellevue should play a major role in facilitating early formation of a management structure, the community will need to take the lead in establishing and maintaining an entity.

### M-1. Management Strategy

Establish a management structure that provides or works towards providing a sustainable funding infrastructure and can serve as a decision-making and advocacy body for the district.

## Visibility Strategies

Visibility of the district is a key component to its success as a “regional destination for the arts.” Strategies that increase the visibility of the district focus on four distinct elements include:

### V-1. Defining the District Strategy –

Define and adopt a boundary for the BelRed Arts District that optimizes its potential. See Draft Boundary Options on pages 24-25.

### V-2. Branding the District Strategy –

Develop a BelRed Arts District brand that highlights how the district is unique on the Eastside and throughout the region.

### V-3. Marking the District Strategy

– Utilize public art to mark the district with a particular focus on major public artworks at key locations and murals by a mix of national, regional and local contemporary and street artists.

### V-4. Amplifying the District Strategy

– Market the BelRed Arts District as a diverse and inclusive regional arts destination.

## Creative Space Strategies

Without access to available and affordable creative spaces, the district won't be sustainable. Strategies include:

### CS-1. Removing Barriers to Arts Development Strategy –

Align policy and code with the vision of the BelRed Arts District.

### CS-2. Existing Space Strategy –

Develop programs and mechanisms that support the ongoing use of existing creative spaces through incentives, equipment and renovation grants and other means.

### CS-3. New Space Strategy –

Advocate for, incentivize and partner in the creation of new affordable creative space and affordable housing for artists with a focus on the 130th Node.

### CS-4. Public Space Strategy –

Utilize public space within the BelRed Arts District as creative or cultural space.

### CS-5. Supportive Spaces Strategy –

Adopt a land use vision that promotes small and diverse non-chain retail, cafes and restaurants within the BelRed Arts District.

## Connection Strategies (C)

The arts district should draw creatives, creative businesses, organizations and others because of the energy sparked through proximity with other innovative thinkers. Connection strategies include:

### C-1. Defining the Center Strategy –

Create a central meeting space that serves as the anchor of the BelRed Arts District.

### C-2. Crosspollination Strategy –

Develop programs and events that facilitate crosspollination between artists, other creatives and the broader community.

### C-3. Filling the District –

Develop events that attract people from the region to the BelRed Arts District.

# INTRODUCTION

BelRed is a creative place where children and adults learn to dance, bands practice and record, artists paint and sculpt, startups seek to innovate, the Eastside comes to buy instruments or have them fixed, and so much more. One of the largest concentrations of arts and cultural activities and businesses on the eastern side of Lake Washington and yet, you have to search to find this side of BelRed.

Though largely hidden, the arts are there, for now. Located in older strip malls, backs of warehouses and buildings tucked away from the street, many of BelRed's arts and cultural uses have thrived for decades. Today, some face the realities of change brought by the 2009 BelRed Subarea Plan and Bellevue's required obligation to plan for growth under the state's Growth Management Act. Others, in areas with less potential for redevelopment, are experiencing escalating property values translating into rising rents threatening their ability to stay in the future.

The BelRed arts community that draws from throughout the region is at an inflection point. First designated as an "Arts Village" in 2009 in the BelRed Subarea Plan and then in 2020 recognized as the "BelRed Arts District" in the Bellevue Economic Development Plan, the BelRed Arts District has long been about acknowledging the arts, sustaining and growing the role of the arts and cementing BelRed as a regional destination for arts and culture.

The arts aren't the only creative innovation happening in BelRed today. Video production companies, major and startup technology companies, interior designers and architects and many others are in BelRed. This creates a new opportunity for the BelRed Arts District to not only be focused on the arts, but the broader creative fields, including the innovators and experimenters working outside of traditional art forms.





## About the Plan

This plan identifies core strategies and action items that will support the continued establishment of the BelRed Arts District. The plan is focused on implementation that will create a sustainable arts district through critical mass creative growth.

This concept is founded in the connection between cultural and economic development and the reality that cultural growth spurs economic growth and vice versa. This is based in studies on the role cultural offerings play in workers decisions to take a job in a new place, what companies are looking for in siting or starting their businesses, and the economic benefits the arts bring to local businesses through events. For the arts in BelRed, their audience, or in many cases their students, are made up of the very people and families that the digital creative or technology sector attracts.

Seeking to spark critical mass creative growth in the BelRed Arts District, this implementation plan connects deliberations, designations and independent efforts that have occurred since 2009 into a comprehensive implementation plan for foundational elements of the District. Included strategies and action items range from quick actions to aspirational longer-term planning, capital and community-led action programs.

## Plan Organization

The plan is organized around four key focus areas. Each of these areas include both strategies and associated action items that will support growth of a sustainable and growing creative district in BelRed.



**Critical Mass Creative Growth:** The idea that cultural development spurs greater economic development and vice versa.



# BACKGROUND



## BelRed Area Description

BelRed is a roughly 900-acre neighborhood area positioned between Bellevue's Downtown on the Southwest and Redmond's Overlake to the Northeast. Considered part of a "growth corridor," the area is envisioned to include a series of dense transit-oriented areas, called "nodes" in city plans, positioned around the three East Link Light Rail Stations including the Wilburton Station, the 120th/Spring District Station and the 130th Station. An "Arts Village" was originally designated close to the 130th Station at the former location of the Pacific Northwest Ballet's Francia Russell Center. This general area has been considered to be what is now called the BelRed Arts District.

While creatives, artists and organizations work in many disciplines throughout BelRed, music, dance and technology are major focuses. The largest arts facility in BelRed is the Pacific Northwest Ballet's Francia Russell Center. Other



*The Francia Russell Center is BelRed's largest arts facility. Opening in 2002, the center was the point on the map identifying an "Arts Village" in the 2009 BelRed Subarea Plan.*

organizations and businesses include Emerald Ballet Theatre, Evolution Studios, West Coast Drum Shop, BelRed Artist Collective, musical instrument shops, artist studios, creative media companies, arts education spaces and many others.

To the west of the 130th “node,” BelRed includes the Spring District and Overlake Hospital with a mix of new office and housing developments. The Spring District, includes a large Meta campus with space for roughly 3,500 employees, and the Global Innovation Exchange (GIX), a graduate-level technology design program run in partnership between the University of Washington and Tsinghua University.

Due to BelRed’s position between major technology hubs in Downtown Bellevue and Redmond’s Overlake, which includes Microsoft’s main campus, BelRed will continue to attract creative technology businesses and employees. This positions BelRed as a place where creativity comes in many forms, whether via traditional arts practices, cultural expression and traditions brought from an international community, or from creative technology workers and entrepreneurs.

## History Of BelRed And The Arts District

BelRed’s history is important because it not only connects the massive transformation it is experiencing now with a pattern of such transformations in its history, but it also details what many artists are thinking about in their work. Looking at BelRed’s series of transformations from one use to another it becomes clear that these transformations are not just physical but cultural. The question facing BelRed’s cultural and creative community today is how to break the cycle of transformation being a cultural loss for one group by making BelRed’s current transformation into a positive one for all.

Home to the Snoqualmie and Duwamish people thousands of years before the arrival of non-native settlers, the BelRed area was comprised of a series of rich creek ecosystems surrounded by mixed coniferous old growth forests, wetlands and marshes. These natural ecosystems and ancestral homelands were devastated in the early 1800s when the logging industry drove the deforestation of old growth trees throughout the Pacific Northwest.



*The Spring District west of the arts district.*



*Japanese American farmers working the land previously logged in the BelRed area.\**



*The Kokaido, also known as the Bellevue Japanese Clubhouse served as both community center and packing house for produce.\**



*A Safeway distribution facility in BelRed, formerly a Japanese American farm, was torn down to build the Spring District.\**

*\*Photos courtesy of Eastside Heritage Center.*

By the beginning of the 20th century, as a network of farms leased by Japanese American families established themselves, community institutions such as the Bellevue Japanese Clubhouse (a community center also known as the “Kokaido”) and the Bellevue Vegetable Growers Association (which shipped goods by train outside of the Seattle area) became the heart of BelRed’s community. During WWII the Japanese American community was forced to leave their homes and move to incarceration camps. While in the camps most of Bellevue’s Japanese American farmers lost their leased farms and didn’t return to Bellevue or BelRed following their release.

Through the 20th century BelRed emerged as the hub of light industry and low-density commercial services on the Eastside. Since the 1990s, industrial uses in BelRed have declined as several big employers moved out or reduced their operations. Around this time a creative community, many of the arts and cultural uses that can be found in BelRed today, moved in to take advantage of cheap rent and easy access to Kirkland, the rest of Bellevue, and Redmond.

In 2009, BelRed was rezoned from light industrial to a mix of office, residential and commercial zones with an update to the BelRed Land Use Code and BelRed Subarea Plan. In addition to the recognition of the arts as a key element of BelRed’s future, these updates highlighted the need for increased density around the coming light rail stations, walkability, affordable housing and environmental elements such as the daylighting of streams. With the light rail system open in 2023, much of BelRed is being rebuilt around the stations. This places BelRed on the verge of another major transformation with high intensity development beginning to reshape the district, slowly transforming it into a new, multicultural, mixed use, transit-oriented community.

Further cementing the importance of the arts in BelRed, in 2020, Bellevue’s Economic Development Plan included a focus on the creative economy, highlighting the establishment of the BelRed Arts District as a key strategy of the city’s economic development.

## **2020 Economic Development Plan:**

### **Creative Economy Strategy 2:**

Develop the built and institutional infrastructure needed to position the BelRed Arts District as a major destination.

Additional relevant creative economy strategies from the plan include:

### **Creative Economy Strategy 1:**

Enhance Bellevue’s leading position in the digital creative sector and encourage linkages with the traditional creative sector where possible.

### **Creative Economy Strategy 3:**

Promote and expand festivals, events and activities to grow the creative economy sector and promote a strong creative brand for Bellevue.

# DISTRICT IMPLEMENTATION

## Focus Areas For Critical Mass Creative Growth

The following implementation strategies are informed by precedent analysis, the Arts District engagement report, the Economic Development Plan, and an in-depth review of existing programs, opportunities, code, and other components that could help support the BelRed Arts District. The strategies both build towards BelRed's version of the common attributes of arts districts (pages 39-40 of this plan) and go beyond that to capitalize on the unique tools, programs and attributes that make the district ripe for growth.

These implementation strategies and the associated initiatives were developed with the goal for launch or completion within five years. Action items associated with each strategy should be considered important to the success of the district, although not every action item needs to be complete for the district and this plan to be deemed successful.

### What does success look like? This plan considers growth and development of the following key focus areas as success:

- 1. Management** - The district has an active and formal managing body. Metric: a formal entity creates dedicated district funding
- 2. Visibility** - The district is recognizable. Metric: Social media presence or majority surveyed
- 3. Creative Space** - New creative spaces are being built and existing ones remain available and affordable. Metric: Square feet of total creative space
- 4. Connection** - The district is seen as a place to come together, innovate and experience art, culture and creativity. Metric: Number of attendees of events. Optional metric: built central meeting place



## Management Strategy (M)

Management of the district is essential to further establishment of the BelRed Arts District. While the City of Bellevue should play a major role in facilitating early formation of a management structure, exactly what management looks like, what the goals of management are, and who takes part is up to the BelRed Arts District constituency of creative businesses, arts and cultural organizations, individual artists and property owners to define, employ and maintain.

This is a critical step. In all arts districts reviewed, a management structure was needed unless a formal benefit - such as a tax abatement - was conveyed by a state or some other government entity. For BelRed, probability of such a benefit being established is low. As such, it is highly recommended that management with a particular focus and connection to the ability to raise funds for the arts district be the first priority in implementing this plan.

**M-1. Management Strategy** – Establish a management structure that provides or works towards providing a sustainable funding infrastructure and can serve as a decision-making and advocacy body for the district.

### Community Action Items:

- A. Encourage stakeholders that have capacity and initiative to take part in the development and future operations of a management entity.
- B. Utilize the Washington State Creative District Precertification checklist to align management entity development with future Washington State Creative District designation.
- C. Work with stakeholders to establish the initial formal entity (BID, nonprofit or nonprofit membership organization, etc).

### City Action Items:

- D. Convene artists, arts organizations, creative businesses and other stakeholders to establish a management road map. Recommendation: Seek to establish a formal entity, independent of the City of Bellevue, that can provide fundraising support for the district, or will build towards that capacity in the near future.

## What Type Of Management Should The Belred Arts District Have?

The answer to this question lives in the goals for the district that the community needs to formalize. For example, if BelRed simply wanted an organization to promote artists, businesses, organizations and events happening in the district, a 501(c)6 membership organization could be all that is needed.

Since past outreach has highlighted much more complex issues than promotion - specifically affordability and broader issues of development - a management structure for BelRed will need be more complex to meet the challenges, and take advantage of opportunities, within the district. This includes a more comprehensive approach that allows for fundraising, advocating, supporting artists and organizations with grants and educational opportunities, etc.

Recommended management structure and prioritization:

1. 501(c)6 member organization - set up first, handles overall management of the district, planning and decision-making
2. Business Improvement District - district promotion, events, programs and grants for creatives and capital investments
3. 501(c)3 organization - focused on philanthropic fundraising

## Visibility Strategies (V)

Visibility of the district is a key component to its success as a “regional destination for the arts.” Strategies that increase the visibility of the district focus on four distinct elements - Defining the District, Branding the District, Marking the District, and Amplifying the District.

**V-1. Defining the District Strategy** – Define and adopt a boundary for the BelRed Arts District that optimizes its potential. See Draft Boundary Options on pages 32-33.

### City Action Items:

- A. Facilitate the identification of a “working” boundary for the district that can support marketing prior to formal boundary adoption in the Land Use Code.
- B. Work with the community to define and adopt a district boundary into the Land Use Code that encapsulates as many arts and creative uses as possible while considering walkability and proximity to the 130th Light Rail Station.

**V-2. Branding the District Strategy** – Develop a BelRed Arts District brand that highlights how the district is unique on the Eastside and throughout the region.

### Community Action Items:

- A. Develop the BelRed Arts District logo and color palette via a collaborative process with the arts district management and stakeholder constituency. Branding should be contemporary, bold and unique, work with online and print formats, easily interpreted and inclusive while also authentic to the district. Branding should not include any literal references to existing uses - like symbols or images from music or dance or another art form. Selected color palette should be avoid typical transportation standard colors and fonts. Branding examples: RiNO Arts District, Capitol Hill Arts District
- B. Develop a signage option for arts and creative uses to print out and install in their window identifying them as a BelRed Arts District business or organization. A temporary district logo can be used prior to final logo adoption.

## Making Creativity Visible

Making creativity visible in BelRed is about building up a lot of small to big moves throughout the district until that creativity is unavoidable.

A small move could be something as simple as a sign in a businesses window noting it is an arts district business or a dancer performing at the 130th light rail station. Big moves could be major public artworks, large murals, festivals and more.

An example of a big move that helped define an entire district that could be applied to BelRed is the Wynwood Walls in Miami, Florida’s Wynwood District. Celebrating street artists from around the globe, this outdoor mural program covers over 80,000 square feet of walls throughout the district. This initially was the invention of a developer looking to draw interest to the area and became the impetus for the creation of the district. Today, Wynwood Walls continues to be a draw for local and national visitors.

A more local example is Sodo Track along a two-mile transit corridor in Seattle. Creating a gateway into Seattle, the program commissioned over 60 artists from 20 different countries. The program was produced by 4Culture with support from Urban Artworks, businesses along the corridor, the Sodo Business Improvement Area, Sound Transit and King County Metro.

## City Action Items:

C. Implement a BelRed Arts District signage program in the Right of Way that utilizes the BelRed Arts District logo and color palette. Ensure that selected colors and fonts do not conflict with typical transportation signage standards.

D. Use color, lighting and technology in art and furnishings in City projects and to highlight the confluence of art and technology and to contrast the district from other areas. The BelRed Arts District should not simply blend in but visually stand out from the rest of the Eastside.

E. Adopt standards and guidelines via the BelRed Streetscape Plan and the Land Use Code that promote the use of color, lighting and technology in art and furnishings in private development within the BelRed Arts District.

**V-3. Marking the District Strategy** – Utilize public art to mark the district with a particular focus on major public artworks at key locations and murals by a mix of national, regional and local contemporary and street artists.

## Community Action Items:

A. Develop and implement a funding mechanism or fundraising strategy to support future investments in public art with the goal of community-managed public art projects by 2026.

## City Action Items:

B. Establish a mural program in early years to raise awareness of the arts and the arts district. Preferred: partner with local businesses and property owners to fund and site murals in the Right of Way and on private facades or walls that are highly visible from key public locations.

C. Advocate for the passing of a citywide percent for art ordinance on all city work. Recommended percentages include a minimum of 1% spent on public art or creative space on projects built outside of the Arts District and 2% spent on public art or creative space on projects built within the district.

D. Fund and implement at least three major public artworks at key locations as called for in the public art chapter of the BelRed Streetscape Plan.

## It All Adds Up

Strategies included in this plan are cumulative - there is no single strategy, or two or three strategies, that will guarantee continued establishment of the BelRed Arts District on their own.

One example of an important program that could benefit the visibility of the district is the adoption of a % for art ordinance. A lot of communities have % for art ordinances, including Seattle and Kirkland, that provide artwork either within a built project equal to the identified percent of the budget (Seattle and Kirkland both have 1% for art ordinances) or contribute to funding for future public art.

In Portland's Central City, the goal of their % for art ordinance is to increase public art and creative space within the neighborhood. At 2% of city budgets for capital projects built within the area, the ordinance provides robust funding that can be applied to a menu of options, including:

1. On-site public art
2. Off-site public art (contributed to a fund)
3. Artists-in-residences
4. Creative Space
5. Or any combination of the above



E. Continue to expand the utility box artist wrap program to new locations within the proposed arts district boundary (until adopted) with a goal of all city-owned boxes within the district wrapped by the end of 2025 or as boxes are replaced with development.

F. Implement artist designed crosswalk thermoplastic treatments at key locations as intersections are rebuilt or have been recently rebuilt (in asphalt).

Timeline: Depends on opportunities and funding. Prioritize locations that connect to existing arts and creative uses or in areas within 1/4 mile of the 130th Light Rail Station in early years expanding to other locations as opportunities arise.

G. Update the grant guidelines for Eastside Arts Partnerships and Special Projects grants to include a bonus for projects and organizations in the Arts District. As the management entity and independent funding is established taper bonus awards for BelRed projects and organizations and consider how the grants could support the growth of other cultural districts within Bellevue.

**V-4. Amplifying the District Strategy –** Market the BelRed Arts District as a diverse and inclusive regional arts destination.

### **Community Action Items:**

**A.** Establish a social media presence and website for the BelRed Arts District.

Timeline: Once a management road map has been complete, launch a BelRed Arts District Instagram page. When branding is complete launch website.

**B.** Fundraise for and implement a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the district and support the BelRed Arts District's businesses, artists and organizations.

**C.** Create content - video or other - that showcases the unique stories within the BelRed Arts District. The "Heart of Bellevue" campaign created by the Bellevue Downtown Association is a good model. Another example are the short art films created for Bellwether 2021 both in longer format and shorter format suitable for social media.

## **Getting Certified by the State**

The State of Washington offers a certification program called the Washington State Creative District program. This program, run by the state's ArtsWA, guides communities through the process of becoming a state-certified creative district.

Adopting a mantra of "It all adds up," the state certification could be a helpful tool in not only being recognized by the state and getting highway signs identifying the district, but it is also a useful program for BelRed's creative community to utilize as they work to plan and establish their district.

The process includes three major steps that a community must go through to be considered for state certification:

1. Gathering a community planning team for the district - this should be made up of artists and creatives, local businesses, the City of Bellevue, arts organizations and others.
2. Planning the district - includes steps like identifying the district's boundary and establishment of a management entity
3. Applying for Creative District Certification
4. Start Activities - State certification lasts for five years and has included a \$50,000 award to certified districts

## Creative Space Strategies (CS)

Space for creative, artistic and cultural pursuits is a major concern for the district over the next five years and beyond. Strategies and initiatives that support the overall increase of creative space that is not just available but affordable, take advantage and work to address the unique opportunities and challenges present in the district. Strategies focus on Removing Barriers to Arts Development, Protecting Existing Spaces, Creating New Spaces, Using Public Spaces, and Supportive Spaces (cafes, bars, restaurants, etc that support activity).

### **CS-1. Removing Barriers to Arts Development Strategy** – Align policy and code with the vision of the BelRed Arts District.

#### **City Action Items:**

- A.** Implement recommended updates into the Land Use Code (Appendix A in this plan). This work could be split between easier updates like clarifying allowable uses and more complicated ones like updating the incentive system as part of the BelRed Look Back update.
- B.** Review and implement recommended Comprehensive Plan and BelRed Subarea Plan policies (Appendix A).

### **CS-2. Existing Space Strategy** – Develop programs and mechanisms that support the ongoing use of existing creative spaces through incentives, equipment and renovation grants and other means.

#### **Community Action Items:**

- A.** Advocate for the retention of existing creative spaces and work to connect creative businesses and organizations directly with agents and property owners when they are seeking to rent or own space.
- B.** Develop and fund an equipment and renovation grant program for nonprofit organizations and artists working in existing creative spaces or seeking to convert an existing space to a creative one in the BelRed Arts District. This initiative should be managed and developed by the arts district management entity. Fundraising could utilize funds

## It's In The Details

Artists and creatives across the country are struggling to find the types of spaces that are affordable and suit their creative production. A big part of that comes from older buildings being replaced with newer spaces that don't have as wide of hallways (good for moving art) or higher ceilings (good for all kinds of arts and creative uses). In many places, a code or regulation doesn't preclude an arts use going in, but it is actually the design of that new space that does. To avoid these outcomes, cities have taken a detailed approach in how they support artistic and creative pursuit with their land use codes.

Many cities, like Bozeman, Montana and Nashville, Tennessee, have worked to remove barriers by updating definitions of what artisan manufacturing is in their code. This clarifies for developers and the city what is allowed to occur and what isn't. The result is that they now allow production of artisan work to be collocated with retail spaces.

Similarly, the cities of Lowell and Somerville in Massachusetts better defined live/work spaces to fit the spacial needs of artistic production with a minimum square footage of a studio live/work space at 750 square feet with the City of Somerville requiring that live/work spaces must include an artist certified by the city. Somerville also allows such spaces to open for retail no more than 12 hours per week no matter the zoning.

from a BelRed Arts District BID (if developed) or existing support programs from 4Culture’s Buildings and Equipment grants programs, corporate support, and support from the City of Bellevue if available among other sources.

### **City Action Items:**

**C.** Map existing creative spaces and existing spaces that have been used by creative uses in the past. This should include both private and public properties including locations where ample Right-of-Way could support outdoor creative uses.

**D.** Study ways to incentive property owners to keep existing creative spaces or to convert existing spaces into creative spaces. This could be through a transfer of development rights to maintain existing creative space or other means.

**CS-3. New Space Strategy** – Advocate for, incentivize and partner in the creation of new affordable creative space and affordable housing for artists with a focus on the 130th Node.

### **Community Action Items:**

**A.** Work with property owners to get arts and creative businesses and art installations into newly built or existing unleased retail spaces either on a longterm basis or on a temporary basis until a longterm tenant is found. Example is EastHub’s work in Downtown Bellevue with the proposed Playhouse development.

### **City Action Items:**

**B.** Update the amenity incentive system in the Bellevue Land Use Code to include creative space incentives in Tier 1 within the 130th Node. This should include cultural and arts performance and practice spaces, art studio spaces, maker spaces, arts facilities and creative education spaces.

**C.** Complete the Artspace Arts Market Survey to study the market need for artist affordable housing and other affordable creative spaces within the BelRed Arts District with preferred future development locations within 1/4 mile of the 130th Light Rail Station.

**D.** Advocate for creative spaces in new development. Utilize the completed Arts Market Survey as an advocacy tool.

## **Creative Space in Union Square in Somerville, MA**

In many ways the City of Somerville’s issues mirror a lot of the concerns heard in BelRed and much of the Eastside - mainly affordability. In Somerville’s case, proximity to Boston is increasing demand for once cheap space and driving new development.

In their Union Square neighborhood, the City and community are working to slow or reverse the impacts on the arts community that development and rising costs are creating. In the Union Square Neighborhood Plan, they connect this issue to economic development: “The Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development has embraced a Space=Work concept to inform policy decisions surrounding the Arts and Creative Economy in Somerville. This idea was first put forward by a portion of Somerville’s artist community based on the premise that without space for creative enterprises and members of the creative workforce to do their work, the sustained and noticeable presence of artists and creative individuals in the community is most likely to disappear.”

The plan includes an Arts Overlay Zone which calls for the establishment of a “Fabrication District” to protect existing buildings and requiring 5% of commercial floor space be set aside in new development for arts and creative uses.

**E.** Consider the development of an Arts and Creativity Factor in the Land Use Code modeled after the Green and Sustainability Factor that currently applies to Downtown Bellevue developments. The Arts and Creativity Factor could include a menu of options weighted by potential impact and cost for developers to choose from in meeting the requirement. Options could include artist affordable housing units, affordable artist work spaces, gallery and installation spaces, performance and practice spaces, administrative space for organizations, maker spaces, public art, outdoor market space and others.

**F.** Research and implement methods for attracting galleries and other small commercial arts businesses to the 130th Shopping Street. Consider a maximum retail frontage length per establishment on the 130th Shopping Street. Recommended 30' maximum frontage per retail (as defined by the Land Use Code) establishment with a preferred retail frontage of 20'.

**CS-4. Public Space Strategy** – Utilize public space within the BelRed Arts District as creative or cultural space.

### City Action Items:

**A.** Ensure that the BelRed Arts District is supported by city plans such as the Parks and Open Space Plan and BelRed Streetscape Plan. Consider how streets and parks can help define the district as a place of creative activity through temporary events like markets and festivals, permanent gathering spaces, focused space for public art, etc.

**B.** Utilize public spaces as places for experimentation particularly with projects that explore technology through art or art and culture through technology. Consider augmented reality, projection and other means that expand the experience and space available for creative expression.

**C.** Amend the Special Events Code and other applicable event and sound code, to make events in cultural districts easier and cheaper to produce. Recommended changes include lower fees, arts district representation on the Special Events committee, a higher sound threshold and a longer daily window (beyond 5:00 pm) to be covered by a sound permit for amplified sound.

## Going Public in BelRed's Streets

In 2009, BelRed was reimagined as a series of dense and walkable neighborhoods. With changes in best practices and a larger interest in utilizing streets as community spaces for eating, shopping and events, Bellevue has been working on drafting the BelRed Streetscape Plan that incorporates lessons learned, a larger focus on art and creative design and how BelRed's streets, particularly its Local Streets, are flexible enough that a cultural event, a street festival, or a block party can happen easily without creating massive disruption.

One example of how streets can do this is to build some streets as pedestrian-focused. The effect is that pedestrian streets resemble linear parks and can easily host a wide range of events, temporary and permanent public art, and performances and markets. Adopting these types of provisions is very important with no current plans for how other types of space can accommodate these elements in the arts district.



*Concept for a Pedestrian Street in the draft BelRed Streetscape Plan.*

D. Expand the City of Bellevue’s Neighbor Link program to accommodate communities living in multifamily areas and urban areas so they are able to host block parties and other community events easily and cheaply.

**CS-5. Supportive Spaces Strategy** – Adopt a land use vision that promotes small and diverse non-chain retail, cafes and restaurants within the BelRed Arts District.

**Community Action Items:**

- A. Work with diverse business member organizations to attract diverse businesses to the BelRed Arts District.
- B. Develop events that draw traffic to bars, restaurants and retail businesses like a monthly art walk, art markets, night markets, and indoor and outdoor music and theater events.
- C. Encourage the participation of supportive businesses in the management and promotion of the BelRed Arts District.

**City Action Items:**

- D. Implement policy and code updates through the BelRed Look Back that promote the BelRed Arts District as a place for small, local and diverse commercial uses.
- E. Launch a streamlined food truck program, an important path for many new diverse restaurants seeking to start a business, in BelRed. This program could play an important role as the district continues to redevelop.

## Arts as a Business Strategy

Many arts and creative districts are either established by a community of businesses seeking to draw people to an area, or businesses quickly realize the benefits of drawing arts audiences to an area.

The Avenues: Ingersoll & Grand Arts District in Des Moines, Iowa is such an example. Sitting between the Western Gateway Park, which includes the Pappajohn Sculpture Park and the Des Moines Art Center, businesses in this area saw an opportunity to tie the sculpture park to the art center with their district. They have since formed a Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District, and received certification from the state as a creative district, to embark on an ambitious public art and marketing campaign for businesses within the district.

For BelRed, the arts and creative community should work with property owners, developers, other businesses including restaurants, bars and cafes, to market the BelRed Arts District as not only a place for arts, innovation and creativity, but also a place to shop, eat, drink, live, learn and have fun.

## Connection Strategies (C)

In order for critical mass creative growth to occur in the BelRed Arts District, people need to see the district as a place to connect and collaborate with other creatives. The arts district should be a draw artists and creatives, creative businesses, organizations and others because of the creative energy sparked through proximity with other innovative thinkers. Connection strategies are really about placemaking - defining the experience and instilling meaning into the Arts District.

For this implementation plan, Connection Strategies are focused on laying the groundwork for the experience of the district. Balanced with the other strategies outlined in this plan, they outline initial steps needed to help define what the district is - a place for creative activity, experimentation, expression, diversity and learning.

Strategies include Defining the Center of the district, developing programs and partnerships for Crosspollination and Filling the District. It is important to note that strategies are focused on the years 2022-2027 and that these are a place to start in developing connection strategies.

**C-1. Defining the Center Strategy** – Create a central meeting space that serves as the anchor of the BelRed Arts District.

### Community Action Items:

**A.** Through the BelRed Arts District management entity, work with the city to identify goals, key programs, opportunity locations and potential partners in developing a vision for a central meeting space. This could be a facility or a park if the space is dedicated to serving the Arts District. Consider whether a central meeting space, open to the Arts District, could be included in designs of a future affordable artist housing development. As many artists, organizations and creative businesses in the district are focused on music, this should be a consideration when developing the design of a central meeting place.

**B.** Coordinate and manage the central meeting space and develop and manage programs such as artists and creatives talks, performances, networking events, educational programs for building a creative businesses or career, etc.

## Meeting In The Middle

Arts and innovation districts like the RiNO Arts District and the Boston Innovation District have understood the importance of an identifiable central meeting place that is dedicated to the district.

In the Boston Innovation District, the City of Boston realized that having a central meeting place was critical in defining the district around it. Putting out a call to developers for the creation of such a space yielded what is now called District Hall - a dedicated privately-built building focused on the mission of the district to spark innovation through connecting creative thinkers.

In the RiNO Arts District, a central meeting place will come together in the planned RiNO ArtPark, which includes affordable artist studios, a food incubator program, public art, a library branch and community spaces all within a park campus.

Community members from BelRed or outside of the area have long remarked that the arts in BelRed are largely hidden. This is why strategies focused on visibility of the district are so important. Also important, is creating some kind of identifiable place as being solely dedicated to the arts district. Such a space would bring the arts forward in BelRed, create connection with the community, and provide opportunities for cultural expression, learning, collaboration and innovation.

## City Action Items:

C. Work to incorporate the community's vision for a central meeting place for the arts district by incorporating it into applicable projects, plans or programs. Examples could include incorporation of a dedicated space into a future affordable artist housing development, inclusion in a park or park plan, or the design of a pedestrian street.

**C-2. Crosspollination Strategy** – Develop programs and events that facilitate crosspollination between artists, other creatives and the broader community.

## Community and City Action Items:

A. Partner with local and regional technology firms to develop and fund programs that connect the digital creative sector with the traditional arts sector present in the BelRed Arts District.

B. Program panel and learning sessions covering issues such as trends in art and music, cultural experience, diversity and equity in arts and technology, other innovative and topics pertinent to the district.

C. Promote collocation of different artists, digital creatives, organizations and creative businesses.

**C-3. Filling the District** – Develop events that attract people from the region to the BelRed Arts District.

## Community Action Items:

A. Work to establish a quarterly open studios/art walk events for artists, creatives, organizations and creative businesses to open their doors to the public with special experiences. As the district continues to develop, work to increase the frequency to monthly events.

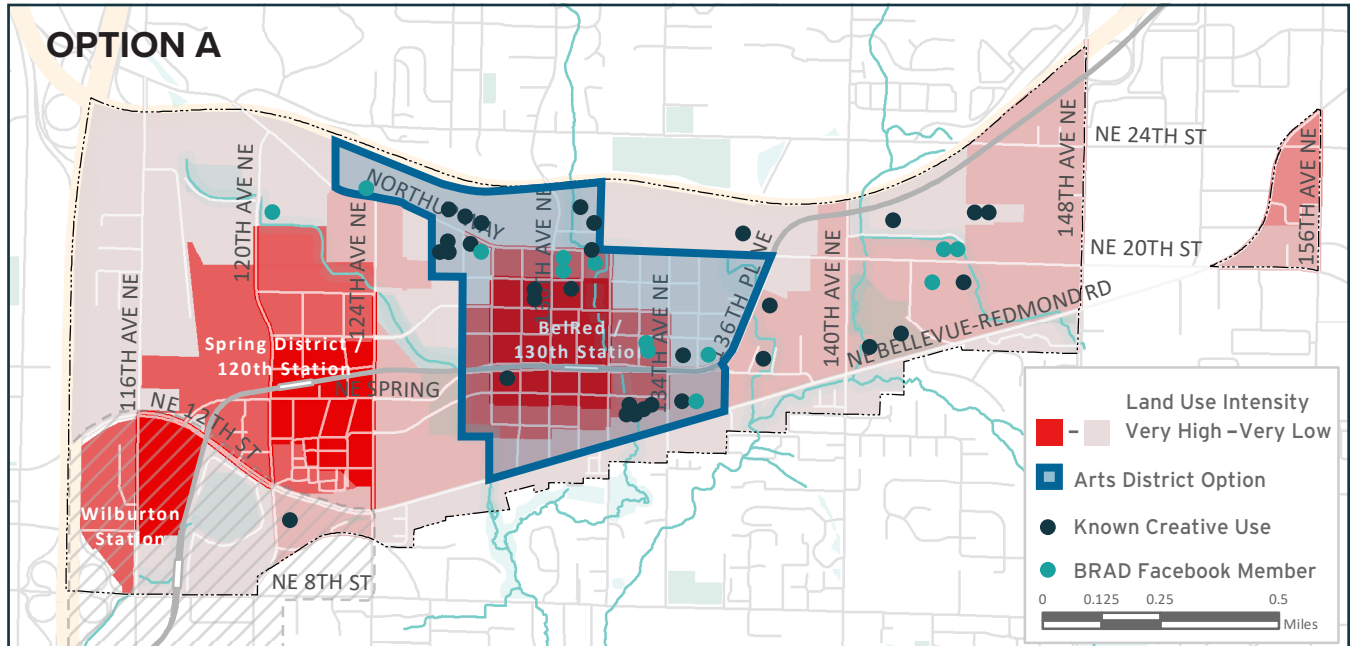
B. Establish regular farmers and artists markets and an annual music event or series in a location close to the 130th Light Rail Station.

C. Create outdoor special events for 100-500 people in evening hours like night markets with food and drink, food trucks, music events and light-based outdoor exhibitions.

D. Create an annual large event celebrating the arts district.

# Draft Boundary Options

Boundary options to consider include a compact version (Option A) and an expanded option (Option B). Consideration should be given to walkability and proximity to other arts uses (avoid areas with dispersed uses).

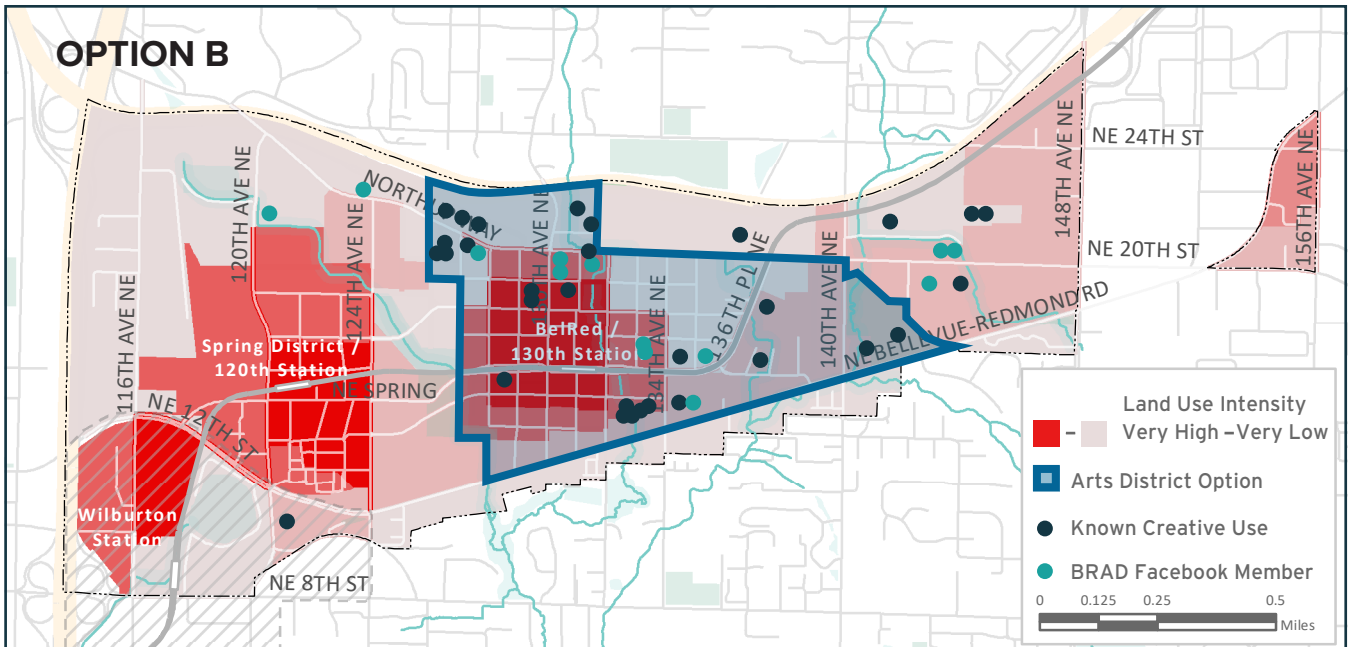


Option A incorporates 28 known arts uses. It is more compact and walkable with a general center of the district around the 130th Light Rail Station. Businesses and organizations include:

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Emerald Ballet Theatre*</b>                  | <b>The Painted Palace</b>             |
| <b>BelRed Artists Collective</b>                | <b>Metro Design Group</b>             |
| <b>Pacific Dance Center</b>                     | <b>Joyful Piano Studio</b>            |
| <b>Seiei Martial Arts</b>                       | <b>Mox Boarding House</b>             |
| <b>Western Washington Shotokan Karate Group</b> | <b>Birch Tree Academy</b>             |
| <b>Caruso Guitar Studio</b>                     | <b>Northwest Piano*</b>               |
| <b>Stargazers</b>                               | <b>Mozart Preschool</b>               |
| <b>The Piano Studio of Dr. Richard Bosworth</b> | <b>Emcee Entertainment</b>            |
| <b>Brandtegit Studios</b>                       | <b>PNB Francia Russell Center*</b>    |
| <b>Arthur Murray Dance Center</b>               | <b>West Coast Drum Shop*</b>          |
| <b>VMG Studios</b>                              | <b>Evolution Studios*</b>             |
| <b>Classic Pianos Bellevue*</b>                 | <b>The Factory Recording Studios*</b> |
| <b>Academy of Kempo Martial Arts</b>            | <b>T-Mobile Office Lab</b>            |
| <b>Alex Studio</b>                              | <b>Illumination Arts Publishing</b>   |

*\* Original BRAD Facebook Group Member*





Option B incorporates 31 known arts uses. It is more dispersed with a general center of the district around the Francia Russel Center east of the 130th Light Rail Station. Businesses and organizations include:

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| BelRed Artists Collective                | Birch Tree Academy             |
| Pacific Dance Center                     | Northwest Piano*               |
| Seiei Martial Arts                       | Mozart Preschool               |
| Western Washington Shotokan Karate Group | Emcee Entertainment            |
| Caruso Guitar Studio*                    | PNB Francia Russell Center*    |
| Stargazers                               | West Coast Drum Shop*          |
| The Piano Studio of Dr. Richard Bosworth | Evolution Studios*             |
| Brandtegit Studios                       | The Factory Recording Studios* |
| Arthur Murray Dance Center               | T-Mobile Office Lab            |
| VMG Studios                              | Del Flags and Embroidery       |
| Classic Pianos Bellevue*                 | Japanese Art Swords            |
| Academy of Kempo Martial Arts            | Illumination Arts Publishing   |
| Alex Studio                              | Highland Community Center      |
| The Painted Palace                       | AMP Dance Studio               |
| Metro Design Group                       |                                |
| Joyful Piano Studio                      |                                |
| Mox Boarding House                       |                                |

*\* Original BRAD Facebook Group Member*

# NEXT STEPS

This plan is intended to be a five-year plan although some elements may take longer to achieve. The community and partners should also

adopt an entrepreneurial approach as new opportunities arise that aren't included in this plan but would be of value to the district.

## 2022 Action Items Launch

Focus Area	Strategy	Action Item(s)	Priority	Responsibility	Completion
Management	M-1 - establish management structure	Item A - Locate stakeholders with capacity to participate	Must Have	Community (with support from City)	Q3 2022
		Item B - Use State Certification as guide	Must Have	Community (with support from City)	Q3 2022
		Item D - Convene stakeholders to establish management road map	Must Have	City	Q3 2022
Visibility	V-1. Defining the District	Item A - Working boundary	Should Have	City	2023
	V-2. Branding the District	Item B - Temporary window signage	Optional	City	Temporary signs in Q2 2022 with permanent logo in 2023
		Item D - Use color, lighting and tech in art and furnishings	Should Have	City	Ongoing - As city projects occur
		Item E - adopt street standards and guidelines for art and furnishings	Should Have	City	2023
	V-3. Marking the District	Item A - Develop funding mechanism for future public art	Must Have	Community	Align funding with management structure development in 2022 with implementation starting with formal entity establishment
		Item B - Establish mural program	Must Have	City	2024 with Community owning it starting in 2025
		Item C - % for Art	Should Have	City	2024 or as able
		Item D - 3 Public art projects	Should Have	City	2026
		Item E - Update City Grant Guidelines	Should Have	City	Launch for 2023 Grants

Focus Area	Strategy	Action Item(s)	Priority	Responsibility	Completion
Visibility (Continued)	V-3. Marking the District (Continued)	Item F - Artist crosswalks	Optional with higher priority close to 130th light rail station	City or private development	Ongoing
	V-4. Amplifying the District	Item A - Social Media and Website	Should Have in 2022 Must Have in 2023	Community	2023
Creative Space	CS-2. Existing Space	Item C - Existing Spaces Inventory	Should Have	City	To inform incentive study for existing creative spaces
		Item D - Study incentives for existing creative spaces	Must Have	City	By BelRed Look Back Start
	CS-3. New Space	Item C - ArtsMarket Survey	Must Have	City	By end of 2022
		Item D - Advocate for space in new development	Must Have	City	Start ASAP with additional tools available at completion of Arts Market Survey
		Item F - Attract arts businesses	Should Have	City	By BelRed Look Back Start
	CS-4. Public Space	Item A - Support from City plans	Must Have	City	Ongoing
		Item C - Amend Special Events and Sound Code	Must Have	City	2022
	CS-5. Supportive Spaces	Item C - Encourage supportive business participation in management	Must Have	Community	Start with management process (M-1 Action Items) and ongoing once established
Connection	C-2. Crosspollination	Item C - Promote collocation of creatives	Should Have	City and Community	Ingrained in Arts Market Survey work. Add new projects as opportunities appear

## 2023 Action Items Launch

Focus Area	Strategy	Action Item(s)	Priority	Responsibility	Completion
Management	M-1. Establish management structure	Item C - Establish management entity	High	Community (with support from City)	2023

Focus Area	Strategy	Action Item(s)	Priority	Responsibility	Completion
Visibility	V-1. Defining the District	Item A - Adopt Boundary	Must Have	City (with support from community)	2024
	V-2. Branding the District	Item A - Logo	Must Have	Community (with support from city)	2023
	V-4. Amplifying the District	Item B - Marketing Campaign	Must Have	Community	Launch by 2024
		Item C - Create Marketing Videos	Should Have	Community	Launch by 2024
Creative Space	CS-1. Removing Barriers to Arts Development	Item A - Land Use Code Updates	Must Have	City	2024 with BelRed Look Back
		Item B - Update policies	Must Have	City	2024 with BelRed Look Back and Comprehensive Plan Update
	CS-2. Existing Space	Item A - Advocate for existing spaces	Should Have	Community	Ongoing
	CS-3. New Space	Item A - Temporary creative uses in unleased space	Optional	Community	Ongoing
		Item B - Update amenity incentive system	Must Have	City	2024 with BelRed Look Back
		Item D - Arts and Creativity Factor	Should Have	City	2024 with BelRed Look Back
	CS-4. Public Space	Item D - Expand Neighbor Link Program	Must Have	City	2023
	CS-5. Supportive Spaces	Item D - Promote small and local business in code	Must Have	City	2024 with BelRed Look Back
		Item E - Food Truck Program	Optional	City	2023
	Connection	C-1. Defining the Center	Item A - Plan central meeting space	Must Have	Community (with support from City)

## 2024 Action Items Launch

Focus Area	Strategy	Action Item(s)	Priority	Responsibility	Completion
Visibility	V-3. Marking the District	Item E - Utility Box Art Wraps	Optional	City	2025 and ongoing

Focus Area	Strategy	Action Item(s)	Priority	Responsibility	Completion
Creative Space	CS-2. Existing Space	Item B - Equipment and renovations grants	Must Have	Community	Launch by end of 2024
	CS-4. New Space	Item B - Public space for experimentation	Optional	City	Ongoing
	CS-5. Supportive Spaces	Item A - Attract diverse businesses	Should Have	Community	Ongoing once management is formally established
		Item B - Develop events	Should Have	Community	Ongoing
Connection	C-1. Defining the Center	Item C - Incorporate plan for central meeting space	Must Have	City (with support from Community)	2024 and ongoing
	C-2. Crosspollination	Item A - Connections between digital and traditional arts	Optional	City and Community	Pilot in 2024 adding refinement and programs each year as desired.
		Item B - Panels and learning sessions	Optional	City and Community	Ongoing

### 2025 Action Items Launch

Focus Area	Strategy	Action Item(s)	Priority	Responsibility	Completion
Connection	C-3. Filling the District	Item A - Open Studios/Art Walk Event	Should Have	Community	Ongoing
		Item B - Farmers and artists markets	Should Have	Community	Ongoing
		Item C - Outdoor mid-size special events	Should Have	Community	Ongoing

### 2026 Action Items Launch

Focus Area	Strategy	Action Item(s)	Priority	Responsibility	Completion
Connection	C-3. Filling the District	Item D - Annual district event	Optional	Community	Ongoing

### 2027 Action Items Launch

Focus Area	Strategy	Action Item(s)	Priority	Responsibility	Completion
Connection	C-1. Defining the Center	Item B - Manage Programs for central meeting space	Must Have	Community	Ongoing

# APPENDIX A - ARTS DISTRICT STUDY

## What makes a Place An Arts District?

Creative people are often attracted to places where other creatives are. One hundred creatives coming together does not make an arts district, so what does, and why is it important for BelRed?

Understanding what makes an arts district and where BelRed is on that trajectory allows for targeted strategies and action items to be developed to get the BelRed Arts District further established. The reason BelRed has long been talked about as a place for the arts is because it has been what is called a "creative cluster" - a place with a higher concentration of artists and creatives. An arts district is something different and the distinction is important for BelRed's future.



*Stage at Highland Community Center in BelRed.*

## Creative Cluster vs Arts District?

There are areas across the globe with a higher concentration of creative people than their corresponding general populations. In some cases these areas are considered arts districts and in others they are more representative of a creative cluster.

Arts districts and creative clusters often have many things in common but the distinction is key to developing an approach for establishing the BelRed Arts District. In many cases creative clusters are the result of economic conditions or a lack of investment that are favorable to artists looking for cheap space to live and work. A creative cluster generally develops organically and can be a single building or a series of buildings across an area. As they often rely on a single property owner or low rents, creative clusters are susceptible to disruption if an owner sells or the area becomes more desirable.

Arts districts are distinguished from creative clusters in two

key ways: an arts district goes through some kind of planning process and they provide some kind of formal benefit to their constituency.

In BelRed, there has been a creative cluster present for the last few decades. The 2009 designation of an Arts Village didn't include a formal benefit even if a location was established through the process of the adoption of the BelRed Subarea Plan. As such, BelRed should be considered somewhere in between a creative cluster and an arts district. To establish BelRed as an arts district, programs and strategies need to be enacted that provide tangible sustainable benefits for current or future artists and creatives working or living in the area.

## Arts District Precedents

Arts districts come in many forms with wildly different planned outcomes. Districts can serve primarily as entertainment districts while others support individual artists working and living in an area. Some districts are established to revitalize neighborhoods, spur economic development, or support a diverse community threatened by gentrification. With the purpose of individual arts districts so varied, it is important to review arts districts across the country and establish common attributes of arts districts before applying those to BelRed. The following pages outline several arts districts from across the country, highlighting lessons that could be applied to BelRed.

## Common Arts District Attributes

If arts districts are so different, how are they similar? A study of arts districts reveals that there are common attributes from district to district. The following pages include briefs on several arts districts across the country. They represent districts with some similarities to BelRed but have different goals and contexts. A study of these and other districts yielded the following common attributes among arts districts:

1. **Districts Recognize or Build a Constituency**
2. **Arts Districts Provide a Formal Benefit**
3. **Arts Districts Have Boundaries**
4. **Partnership with Government is Key**
5. **Arts Districts Are Unique**
6. **Arts Districts Are Managed**

# Boston Innovation District

## Boston, Massachusetts

**Primary Constituency:** Creatives and businesses

**Purpose:** The purpose of the district is to spur collaboration, innovation and investment by working to locate artists, creatives and innovative entrepreneurs in proximity.

**Origin:** Former Boston Mayor Thomas Menino launched a vision for the district in 2010 to transform roughly 1,000 acres of the South Boston waterfront area.

**Management Structure:** This district is led primarily by the City of Boston with a heavy emphasis on public-private partnerships to spur development.

**Financing Sources:** Financing for district initiatives have come largely from the city facilitating connections between private developers and innovative businesses.

### Key Initiatives:

**Attracting key partners that create activity:** initial partner was MassChallenge, an incubator and accelerator program that brought over 200 startups and hosted over 100 events in the first year. The city helped negotiate free rent from a developer for a year to draw them to relocate.

**City-funded full-time position:** to market the district through social media, hang out in the district, talk with stakeholders and residents and businesses versus having an office dedicated to the district.

**Develop Clusters:** centralize entrepreneurs to catalyze rapid innovation.

**Experimental:** Entrepreneurial mindset and process - developed experimental framework characterized by expedited decision making and planning flexibility. "Move small, move fast; be a much more nimble [public] entrepreneur. That's what we did. We never had any budget. We never had any task force. We just went and grabbed opportunistic things." -Boston City Employee<sup>1</sup>

**Flexible Housing Options:** Developed an Innovation Housing vision focused on affordability and networking-oriented common spaces. As implementation, Boston Redevelopment Authority approved plans for 12,000 new residential units with 15 percent as affordable housing and another 15 percent as micro-units to keep rents low.

**Dining/Entertainment:** City worked to attract new and different establishments to the area and encouraged chains to test new concept restaurants.

**Central Meeting Place/District Hall:** City called for designs of a central meeting place to anchor the district. District Hall, built by private development, is a place to connect, test concepts, and learn. Key education programs focus on startup and entrepreneurial development, including an accelerator program, run by Venture Cafe.

**Lessons for BelRed:** The City can't do it on their own - it takes collaboration and partnership with stakeholders, businesses and developers to define a place. Be opportunistic, move fast, and small wins, coupled with targeted big moves, can add up to big change.

<sup>1</sup> *The Development of Boston's Innovation District (2015, The Intersector Project, <https://intersector.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/The-Development-of-Bostons-Innovation-District.pdf>)*



# Wynwood District

## Miami, Florida

**Constituency:** Businesses and property owners

**Purpose:** To support the growth of businesses, creative or otherwise, within the district through art events and art educational programs with a major focus on street art as an attraction.

**Origin:** The Wynwood stemmed from the imagination of developer Tony Goldman who saw Miami's warehouse district as an opportunity to draw people through a huge focus on street art, galleries, open spaces, and bars and restaurants. Starting from an original six-building concept the area grew into a larger business improvement district.

**Management Structure:** The Business Improvement District is a municipal board of the City of Miami formed through city resolution in 2013.

**Financing Sources:** Business Improvement District includes over 400 businesses across 50 square blocks

### Key Initiatives:

**Wynwood Walls:** Wynwood Walls is a rotating outdoor mural program across the district. The 2021 show included major murals from 13 national and international street artists. An additional program called Wynwood Doors paints murals on warehouse roll-up doors.

**Street Art:** Wynwood has over 200 murals throughout the district.

**Art Walk:** A monthly art walk is a lively outdoor and indoor event with music, food, street art and gallery tours and more.

**Art Basel:** Art Basel has expanded into the Wynwood District in recent years drawing thousands of artists, curators, gallery owners and collectors to the area.

**Marketing and Business Support:** The BID's main purpose is to market the district as a global center for arts and to market the businesses within the district. The BID also provides resources to businesses looking to locate in the Wynwood or existing businesses that need management guidance.

**Lessons for BelRed:** With BelRed's industrial past, including storage and warehouse facilities, the Wynwood's strategy of utilizing street art on these buildings could be an effective way to further define the district. Additionally, with new development happening rapidly around the 130th light rail station, new murals could be incentivized through the land use code's amenity incentive system.

Wynwood's Business Improvement District, serving over 400 businesses, has been an effective management entity that has pushed forward the identity of the Wynwood as a global center for art. With a large membership base in the BID, the Wynwood is able to produce and invest in programs that drive people to want to live in or visit the district and to attract businesses to the area.

# Valley Arts District

## Providence, Rhode Island

**Constituency:** Artists and galleries

**Purpose:** To support and attract artists and galleries working or selling artwork in the district with financial incentives.

**Origin:** The state of Rhode Island passed a law effective in 2013 to exempt any sale of original or limited edition artworks created or sold by writers, composers, artists or galleries within the state from sales tax. Rhode Island also has designated arts districts throughout the state where art made and/or sold is also exempt from state income tax. The Valley Arts District is one of those districts.

**Management Structure:** The district was created by the state of Rhode Island and the financial benefits are provided directly by the state. There are active organizations within the district that program events and educational programs like the Steel Yard and the Valley Arts Center, but no current management entity for the district exists beyond the framework and benefits within the district provided by the state.

**Financing Sources:** State of Rhode Island's sales and income tax abatement for artists and artwork sold in the district.

### Key Initiatives:

Sales and income tax abatement has driven an increase in art sales within the state and within the district and buyers benefit from no sales tax and artists benefit from increased sales.

**The Steel Yard:** This development took a former polluted industrial site with contaminated soils and created a park-like complex of artist studios, artisans, and workshops with educational

programs focused on industrial arts. Because of the contaminated soils, the development is also required to manage stormwater runoff on site. This confluence of industrial arts uses and regenerative environmental design could be a model for BelRed. Additionally, the Steel Yard functions as a central meeting space for the district.

**Lessons for BelRed:** Arts districts and the programs that support them are unique and should be tailored to the constituency they are trying to serve.

The Valley Arts District, and all arts districts formed in Rhode Island as part of the state legislation, demonstrate that arts districts can be formed at the local or state level or both. In Washington State, there is a state certification program for Creative Districts that currently has a small benefit (signage and possible small grants) but it doesn't provide the same scale of meaningful benefits that the Rhode Island legislation does.

For the BelRed Arts District, strategies should pursue state certification, local designation and local financing. If advocacy pushed the state to pass sales tax abatement for the sale of original or limited edition artworks, there would still need to be other strategies to support issues like affordability, marketing, creating new spaces and keeping existing ones, event and program funding and others to establish a sustainable arts district in BelRed.

# The Avenues: Ingersoll and Grand

Des Moines, Iowa

**Constituency:** Businesses and community

**Purpose:** The initial public-private partnership built the 13-acre Western Gateway campus which was largely focused on community access to art and arts education. Since then, the district has grown to encompass a larger area with a mix of creative and other businesses. This expansion has shifted the focus of the district to include supporting businesses through attracting people to shop, eat and view public art.

**Origin:** The design of the Western Gateway Park was funded by an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The success of the Western Gateway and, in particular, the four-acre Pappajohn Sculpture Park, prompted neighboring businesses to work together with the state of Iowa in 2021 to designate the area as a cultural and creative district.

**Management Structure:** The district is managed by a 501(c)3 non-profit called The Avenues - Ingersoll & Grand Restoration. There is also a Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID), a 501(c)6 organization with a separate board from the 501(c)3 organization.

**Financing Sources:** Funding comes from the SSMID, through tax incremental financing (TIF), the Iowa Arts Council, and private donations to fund maintenance, improvements like public art, marketing and promotion, and events.

## Key Initiatives:

**Public art:** At the east end of the district, the Pappajohn Sculpture park includes artworks from esteemed artists like Yayoi Kusama, Mark

di Suvero, Ai Weiwei, Yoshitomo Nara, Kieth Haring and many others. With the Des Moines Art Center on the west of the district with a commercial area in between, the district has set a goal of installing 20 public artworks in the next five years within the commercial area to better connect the sculpture park with the Art Center.

**Marketing and promotion** - the district is working to attract users to the area with events, marketing of businesses within the area and more broadly, marketing the district as a whole.

**Ingersoll Live:** an annual street fair focused on family-friendly events, music, arts and crafts for sale, and food.

**Lessons for BelRed:** There are a number of similarities between BelRed and this part of Des Moines. First, before designation, they each had a number of the pieces they needed to create momentum in establishing each district. Des Moines had an active philanthropic community, like Bellevue, a major institution with the Des Moines Art Center, like BelRed's Francia Russell Center, and a wealth of creative small businesses just like BelRed. The key elements that The Avenues needed was organization, management, and dedicated funding to create their district and work to implement a vision for its future. BelRed will need to address those same issues, plus the issue of affordability and available creative space, in order to continue on a path towards establishment and sustainability.

# RiNO Art District

## Denver, Colorado

**Constituency:** Artists, businesses and property owners

**Purpose:** to promote the arts and entrepreneurialism in the district, attract and be inclusive of artists when new development occurs, support artists and businesses working in the district, and provide educational programs to the broader community.

**Origin:** the RiNO Arts District grew out of a community of artists concerned about being pushed out as new investment came to the area. They formed a 501 (c)6 membership organization to advocate for artists in the area. Out of this organization, three other entities, described in detail below, were established to support the district.

**Management Structure:** The RiNO management structure is made up of four distinct entities:

1. RiNO Art District Membership Organization – coordinates management of the district.
2. Business Improvement District (BID) – funding supports arts commissions and programs, artist grants, and ArtPark Community Hub, a park that serves as the district’s central meeting place.
3. General Improvement District (GID) – funding supports investments in infrastructure like streetscapes and maintenance of the district.
4. Keep RiNO Wild – the district’s nonprofit fundraising entity focused on arts education and affordable arts spaces.

**Financing Sources:** In total, the four organizations collectively raise over \$3 million annually to go towards funding arts and infrastructure initiatives in the district.

## Key Initiatives:

**ArtPark Community Hub:** a central meeting place for the district including a park, a Denver Public Library, subsidized artist studios, and a restaurant that supports refugees and immigrants starting new food businesses.

**Pop Up Park:** Each year a temporary park is built in RiNO to combat the lack of public open space.

**Creative Crosswalks:** Installs artist-designed crosswalk patterns.

**RiNO Mural Program:** Annual program focused on outdoor 2D and street art.

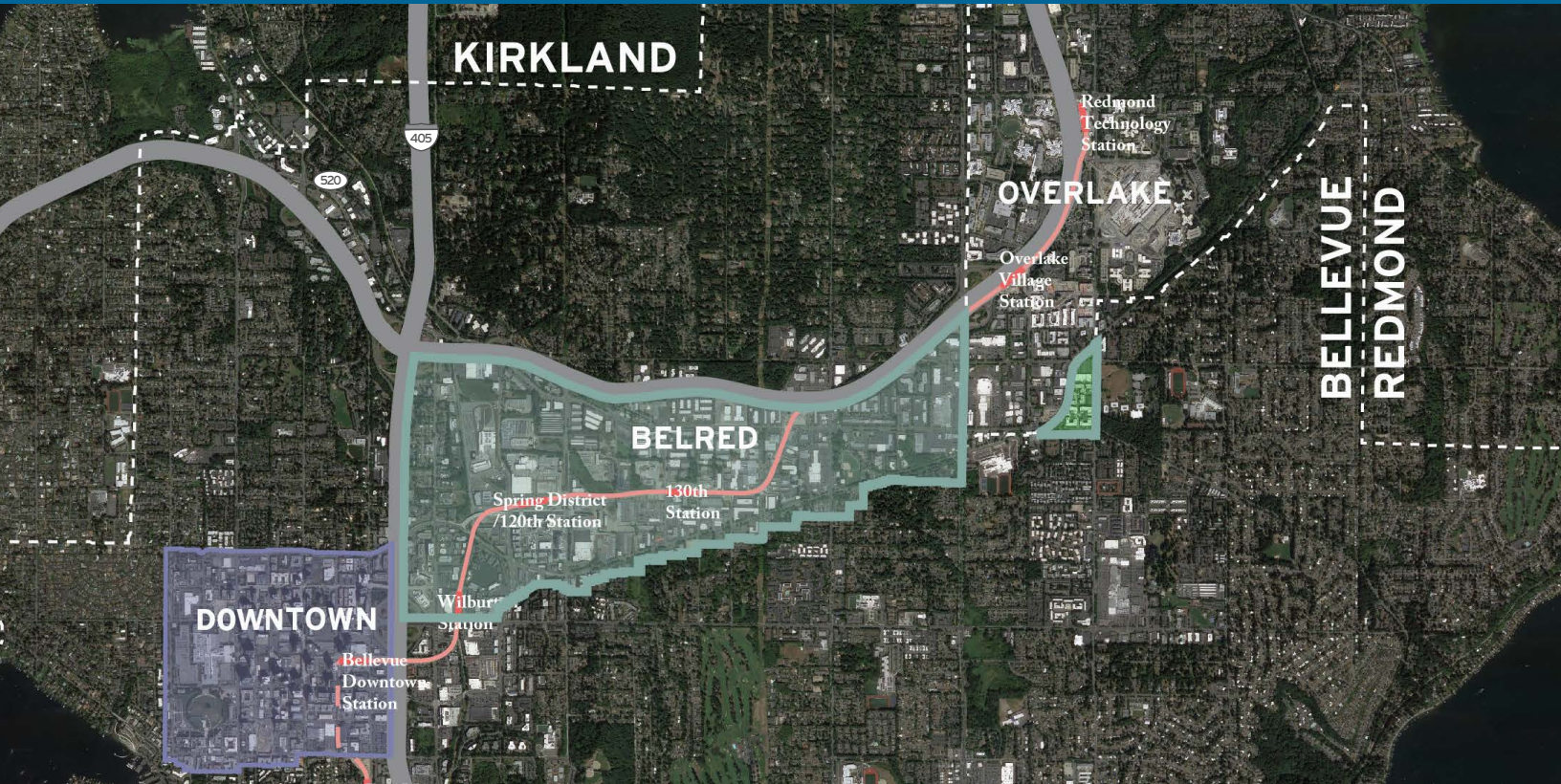
**Affordable Housing:** In 2016 RiNO became the first neighborhood in Denver to offer an FAR incentive in exchange for affordable housing. To date, it has provided 95 affordable units in the RiNO.

**Grants:** Social Impact grants for \$50k to 18 organizations/year, artist grants and commissions.

**Public Realm Improvements:** RiNO funds street studies and improvements targeted to improve access, safety and appearance of the district.

**Lessons for BelRed:** While there are multiple programs run in the RiNO that could be mirrored in BelRed, the biggest takeaway is the organization and missions of the four different RiNO organizations. As separate entities they are able to be mission-driven and capitalize on different fundraising streams. The connection between management and fundraising will be critical for the success of the BelRed Arts District.

# APPENDIX B - ADDITIONAL BELRED INFORMATION



## District Description

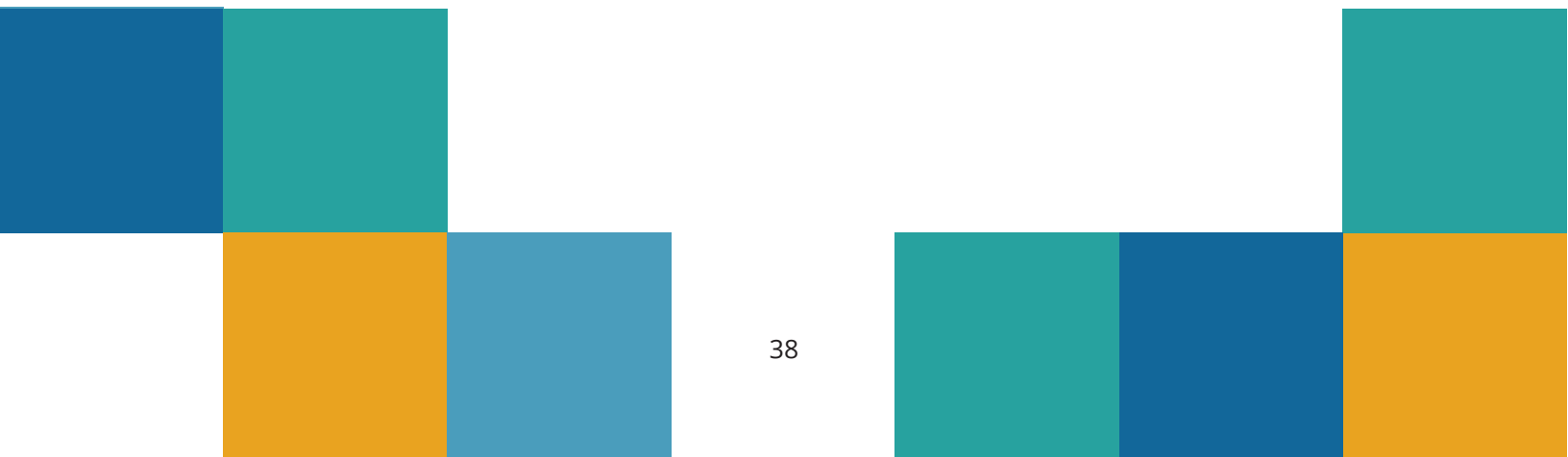
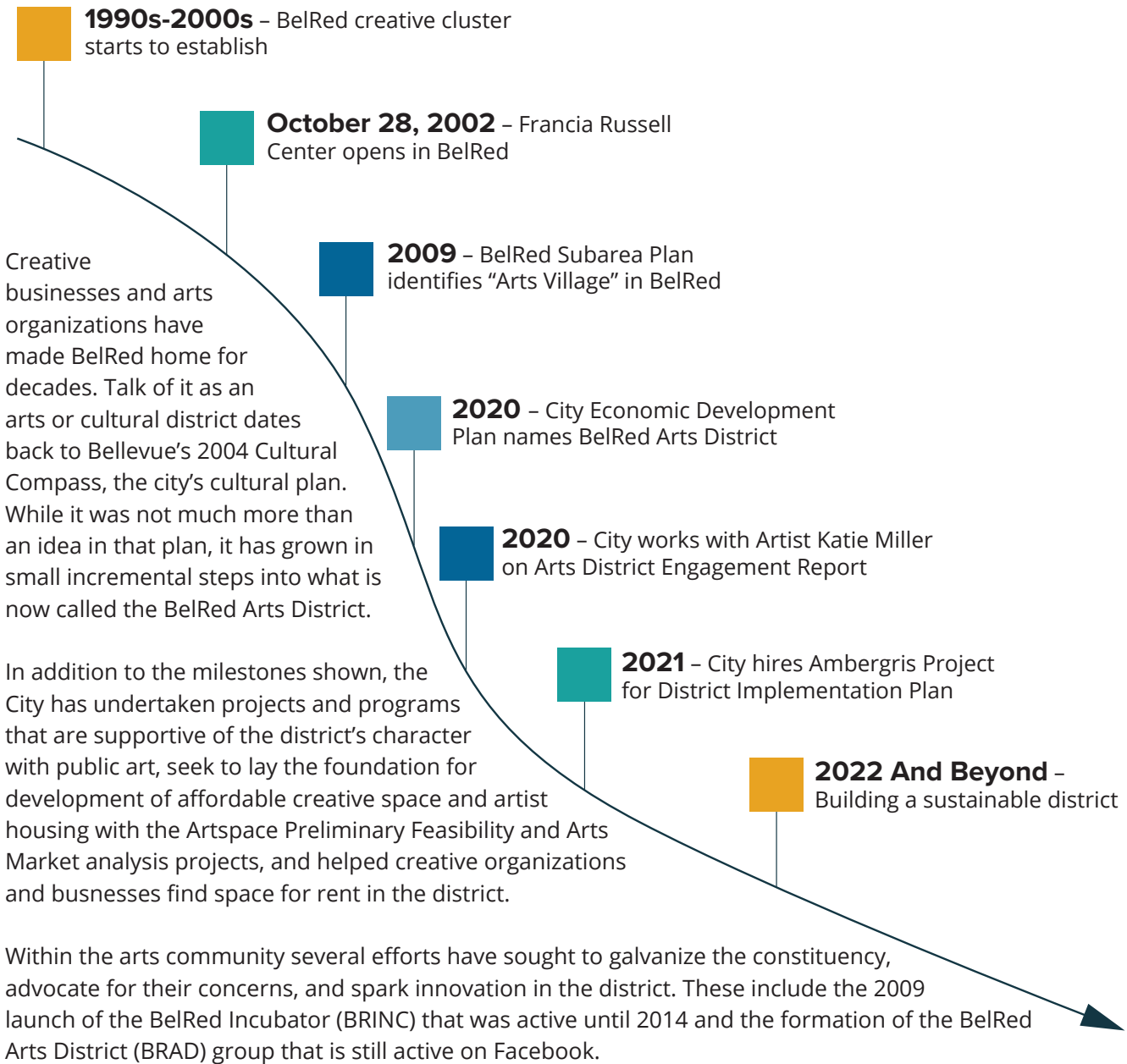
For the past number of decades, artists, arts and cultural organizations and creative businesses have found a home within BelRed’s aging light industrial and commercial buildings. BelRed has the largest concentration of arts and creative uses in a single neighborhood in Bellevue. This is due to the availability of the types of spaces arts uses often need, the relative affordability of the area compared to other parts of the Eastside and access to Interstate 405 and Highway 520.

While the 2009 BelRed Subarea Plan identified a BelRed “Arts Village” as a means of recognizing the arts constituency, that same update triggered the dramatic changes the district is seeing today - escalating property values, massive redevelopment

and investment, international companies building campuses, and more. Today the district is at risk of slowly, or in some cases, not so slowly, disappearing as artists, creative businesses and arts organizations are pushed out of their longterm spaces or simply look for more affordable longer-term locations. This puts the district, and really Bellevue, at an inflection point of either sustaining and growing their creative community or watching it slowly disappear.

As such, this implementation plan is not just about sustaining and growing the Arts District, but also about sustaining and growing Bellevue’s and the region’s cultural ecosystems.

# Arts District Timeline - A Look Back



## Common Arts District Attributes & BelRed

What type of arts district is the BelRed Arts District? Applying common attributes to BelRed is a great method for illustrating the characteristics, opportunities and issues present in the BelRed Arts District and helps frame the implementation strategies and the supportive action items outlined in the Arts District Implementation chapter of this plan.

### Districts Recognize or Build a Constituency

Whether a constituency is already established, or the goal of the arts district is to draw one, arts districts all need to have a constituency identified, meaning who is the arts district trying to serve. Arts Districts often serve more than one constituency but should have a primary constituency identified.

**Applied to BelRed:** BelRed's constituency has long been the artists, organizations and creative businesses in BelRed. A secondary constituency of property and business owners, particularly if fundraising remains a goal, could be incorporated into future strategies.

### Arts Districts Provide a Formal Benefit

Without a benefit conveyed to the identified constituency there is no reason to establish an arts district. There has to be some kind of supportive program, funding, affordable housing or creative space, or another component that benefits those the district is trying to serve.

**Applied to BelRed:** Currently, there is no formal benefit of the Arts District. A benefit, or menu of benefits, need to be developed in order for the BelRed Arts District to be of value to the constituency.

### Arts Districts Have Boundaries

Boundaries serve to identify what is in the district and what is not, and as a mechanism for focusing programs to specifically serve that area.

The boundary of a district can either be identified via a business improvement district formation process, through local, county or state designation or through another district formation process.

**Applied to BelRed:** The BelRed Arts District needs an adopted boundary. This could benefit a self-taxing district, like a Business Improvement District, or be a key mechanism for incentivizing development of new creative spaces via the Bellevue Land Use Code. The larger the boundary the more potential incentives compete with other priorities diluting their potential impact.

### Partnership is Key

An arts district is not just an identified location and constituency with benefits. What sets apart arts districts from other areas with a density of arts activity is that arts districts are established through a planning process either run by or engaged with local, county or state government.

**Applied to BelRed:** Bellevue sees the establishment of the BelRed Arts District as a key creative economy strategy of its Economic Development Plan, but the city can't do it all on their own. The Arts District needs to utilize a partnership approach to all strategies to be successful.

## Arts Districts Are Unique

There is no single formula for what an arts district should do, who they serve or what they look like. Each district is defined by specific goals, who the district serves and local conditions.

**Applied to BelRed:** BelRed has unique opportunities to catalyze an arts district that not only serves the existing arts and creative community, but has the potential to create critical mass creative growth. The prevalence of music and dance within the district, proximity to major technology and innovation hubs in Downtown Bellevue, Kirkland and Redmond, access to light rail and freeways, increased investment and development, unique tools that could support artist affordable housing, surrounded by an extremely diverse community that is engaged in the arts, all define the BelRed Arts District, what it will look like and who it serves and attracts.



*Children dance at Pacific Northwest Ballet's Francia Russell Center. Photo courtesy of PNB.*

## Arts Districts Are Managed

Management is critical to the ongoing sustainability and viability of every arts district. This is rooted in the distinction between a creative cluster and an arts district – an arts district provides a formal benefit to its constituency. In most districts, management is closely connected to funding the district to provide support for artists, commissions, programming, public art, artist housing or other elements.

**Applied to BelRed:** BelRed will need a management entity, not just a loose district association in order to advocate for, administer, fundraise, and guide the creative growth of the district.



# Key Engagement Report Findings

In 2020, artist Katie Miller, via a grant from 4Culture and additional funding from the City of Bellevue, conducted extensive outreach throughout

the BelRed community and compiled it into an engagement report titled “BelRed Arts District Project.” This report summarized findings for a survey of over 200 responses and one-on-one interviews with over 60 BelRed stakeholders. Below is a summary of the issues raised through the engagement.

Topic	Expressed Issue	Need
Collaboration	Involve government, institutions, businesses, non-profits, arts and cultural organizations, artists and the broader community in the development of the district.	Incorporating collaboration measures into all implementation strategies for the Arts District
Leadership and partnership	No District leadership. Community would like to see the City of Bellevue take a leadership role in the establishment of the arts district  (Note: this plan does not recommend that the city take a complete leadership role, but rather lead the facilitation of the development of a managing entity)	Formal Arts District Governance Group (established entity not loose affiliation)
		Additional city staffing resources to support formation of managing entity, visibility strategies and others.
		Advocating for and facilitating development or dedication of affordable creative spaces
Financing, Funding, and Sustaining the District	No plan for continued financing to ensure sustainability of the district.	Dedicated arts funding
Defining Arts and Culture Within the District	Key arts and cultural components not defined in the district.	Develop and employ strategies that build off of existing assets and allow for change, if needed, over time.
Retention and Attraction - artists and creatives, creative businesses and organizations	Desire for inclusive, affordable, and accessible place for creative people to come together.	Affordable creative spaces (galleries, performance, studios, practice spaces, artist housing, maker spaces)
Long-term Sustainability	No clear commitment from the City of Bellevue to advance the district	Achievable implementation strategies and action
Affordable Creative Space	Lack of affordable or available space, or worry about losing current space, for affordable studio spaces, performances spaces, indoor and outdoor community spaces and artist housing.	Comprehensive affordable creative space strategies for existing and new spaces
District Visibility	Lack of awareness of the Arts District	Signage, branding, event and resources website, public art, art and cultural events
Branding and Identity	No marketing. Market Arts District as an inclusive, affordable and accessible multi-cultural hub.	Identifiable brand and marketing strategy

*Nails* by Christian Moeller

EasTrail, BelRed

