

Information & Discussion

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

Bellevue Arts Commission

1E-109 or Zoom, 4:30 p.m.

Commission Staff Contact: 425.452.4064

BELRED ARTS DISTRICT UPDATE

At this meeting, staff will give an update on the status of the BelRed Arts District, including progress made and plans moving forward.

BACKGROUND

BelRed has the highest concentration of arts and cultural businesses, organizations and artists in Bellevue by a wide margin. In acknowledgment of that creative cluster, the City designated the BelRed Neighborhood as an “Arts Village” as early as 2009 in the BelRed Subarea Plan. The idea of the BelRed Arts District grew from there, with the most recent City policies regarding the BelRed Arts District appearing in the 2020 Economic Development Plan.

In 2022, Consultant Scott McDonald prepared for the City a five-year BelRed Arts District Implementation Plan (Attachment A). This plan builds off past work to establish the BelRed Arts District. It adopts a position that for the BelRed Arts District to be meaningful, it can't stay as it is; it must see a critical mass of creative growth. To achieve that growth, strategies in this plan harness arts and creative potential, the built environment, programs, and human and institutional capital.



The Implementation Plan outlines 4 strategic areas for Critical Mass Creative Growth of the Arts District. They include **Management, Visibility, Creative Space, and Connection**. The update below will be presented in the context of the 4 strategic areas.

Connection

Goal: The district is seen as a place to come together, innovate and experience art, culture, and creativity.

In Quarters 2 & 3 of this year, Arts Program staff have been conducting major outreach to BelRed community stakeholders in what we've called the “BelRed Roadshow.” This outreach has included over 60 people/organizations: artists & creatives, BelRed property owners, major regional employers and other cooperate stakeholders, community leaders, and folks who have had previous involvement. Other areas of activity under the “Connection” strategic area include:

- **BelRed Roadshow**
- **Creative Business Owner door-knocking and support services**

Management - BelRed Arts District Association

Goal: The district has an active and formal managing body.

Extensive ongoing work has been taking place around the creation of a formal managing body for the Arts District. In June 2022 BelRed Stakeholders gathered for the first meeting of the “BelRed Arts District Association” Proto-Board of Directors. This body of community stakeholders has started the heavy lift of creating a formal non-profit organization that would represent the BelRed Arts District

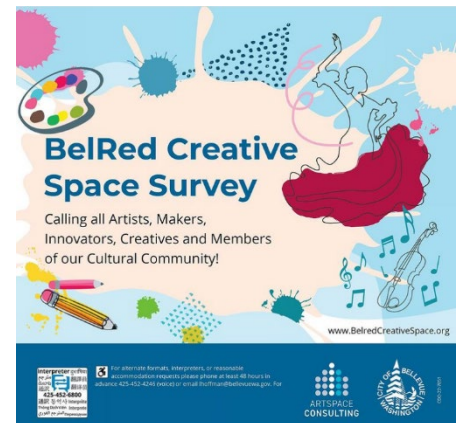
and work with the City as a partner toward the strategies in the Implementation Plan. Some areas of activity on the BelRed Arts District Association include:

- **Social Media pages live.**
 - Instagram: @BelRed_Arts_District currently 598 followers.
 - Facebook: @Bel.Red.Arts.District currently 626 followers.
- **Organizational Charter, 80% completed**
- **Programs Exercise and Planning**
- **BelRed Arts District Logo & Website launching Q4, 2022**
- **Mission Statement: A vibrant grassroots creative district located in Bellevue, WA. One that inspires and connects everyone through music, art, dance and technology.**

Creative Space

Goal: New creative spaces are being built, and existing ones remain available and affordable.

Available and affordable space is a consistent area of concern when talking with the creative community. Priorities are both affordable artist housing and affordable commercial. In Quarters 3 & 4 of this year, staff have worked with Artspace Consulting and a Core Group of community members to conduct an Arts Market Study. The study's survey tool will be live through September 15, 2022, and a final report will be delivered before the end of the year. Other areas of activity under the "Creative Space" strategic area include:



- **Borders & Boundaries Discussions**
- **Artspace Consulting // Affordable Artist Housing**
 - Arts Market Study, including:
 - Artist Creative Space Survey
 - Organizational Creative Space Focus Groups
- **Sound Code Amendments**
- **Advocating for creative spaces in new development**
- **Land Use Code study.**

Visibility

Goal: The district is recognizable.

Although currently there are over 100 arts and culture uses in the BelRed Neighborhood, they are often invisible to people passing through. Many visibility efforts are currently in progress, with an eye toward completion before the light rail opens in 2024.

- **City of Bellevue Arts Grants – BelRed Bonus**
- **Public Art Projects at 130th & 121st streets.**
- **Mural Pilot Program**
- **Street Banners – in progress**
- **Window Signage – in progress**

NEXT STEPS

In Q1 2023 a BelRed Arts District update will be presented to Bellevue City Council.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment E: BelRed Arts District Implementation Plan

STAFF CONTACT

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