

# Information and Discussion

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Bellevue Arts Commission

1E-109 or Zoom Meeting

City of Bellevue, WA

## Artspace Market Study Report

At today's meeting, staff will present a draft Arts Market Study and Technical Report by Artspace Consulting.

### BACKGROUND

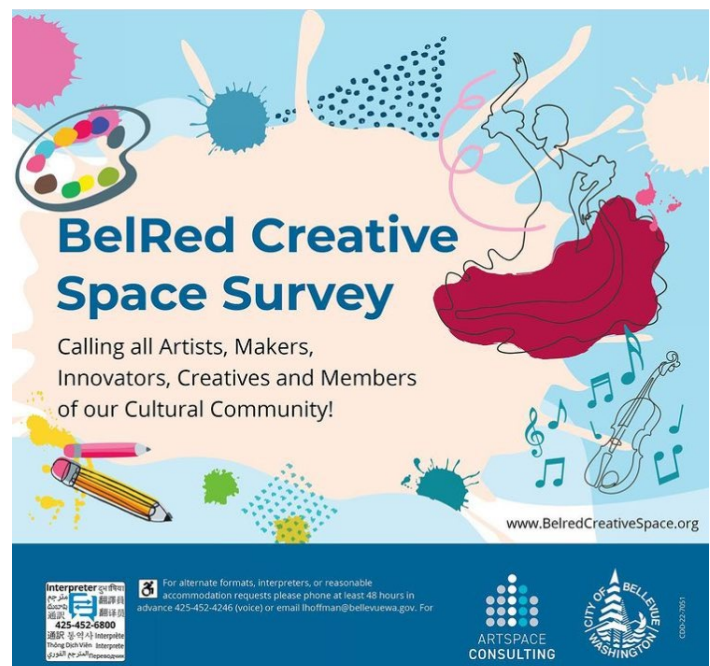
In 2009 the Bellevue City Council adopted the BelRed Subarea Plan in tandem with new zoning and updated Land Use code regulations, all measures that helped position BelRed's transformation from an underutilized light industrial area to a collection of mixed-use nodes with thriving businesses and residences clustered around East Link's upcoming light rail stations. Other planning efforts, such as the BelRed Streetscape Plan which will add a more walkable and connected series of streets, will over time drastically change BelRed as well. While this change is critical to support Bellevue's growing population and business sector, BelRed will need to face this change with considerations to displacement, affordability, and retaining its heritage and character.

In 2017, building off strategies outlined in the draft Affordable Housing Strategy, and as a means to leverage the economic and placemaking potential of the arts, the City of Bellevue contracted with Artspace to conduct a feasibility study looking into the potential of an affordable artist housing and arts facility development in the BelRed Arts District. The results of that Preliminary Feasibility Study are available on the city's website.

In 2021, city staff reached out to Artspace and began conversations about the necessary next steps needed to deliver affordable artists' housing and commercial space. In 2022 the City of Bellevue contracted with Artspace to conduct an Arts Market Study to assess the market needs and community demand for affordable artist housing and affordable commercial space for creatives. The study consisted of two main parts:

### Arts Market Study Artist Survey

The Arts Market Study (AMS) includes an online survey and subsequent analysis of the data including, types of spaces, amenities, price points, and a description of the creatives who need space. The survey collected data from artists living, working, and/or doing business in Bellevue and the surrounding region. The survey instrument was designed to assess the demand for affordable live/work, studio-only and shared spaces; reveal the demographics of interested artists and form an interest list for people who may want space in a completed project. Artspace relied on City of Bellevue staff and a Core Group of project supporters to promote the survey locally and ensure a robust response.



## **Focus Groups with Arts Organizations/Creative Businesses**

In order to deliver information about the space needs of local arts/cultural organizations and creative businesses, that can be used to inform a mixed-use project and/or advance other creative space opportunities, Artspace conducted two Focus Groups with local arts organizations. Focus Groups were held virtually, and information was collected through conversations, questionnaires, and online platform activities. Follow-up smaller group or individual conversations were conducted as needed to dive deeper into the capacity and needs of the community.

### **CORE GROUP**

A Core Group of artists, community members, and Arts Commissioners played a vital role in the Arts Market Study Process. They advised Artspace about the specifics and unique aspects of the Bellevue creative community and led outreach efforts to get enough survey responses. Members of the Core Group included:

Angela Cheung, Arts Advocate/BelRed Arts District Association  
Ashmita Gulati, Arts Commission Vice-Chair  
Eden Helstein, Owner of Evolution Studios/BelRed Arts District Association  
Maria Lau Hui, Arts Commission Chair  
Rita Meher, Executive Director, Tasveer  
Katie Miller, Artist/Author of the 2020 BelRed Arts District Report  
Xin Xin, Artist

### **RESULTS & FINDINGS**

There were 437 total survey respondents of which a significant 400 (92%) indicated an interest in at least one type of affordable creative space (artist housing, private or shared studio/workspace) in Bellevue's BelRed Arts District. Surveys were completed by a broadly diverse group of individuals, representing more than 30 creative fields. Most live in the greater Seattle metro region with (27%) currently or (16%) in the past having resided in Bellevue. Their ages range from over 70 to 20 years or younger and the majority identify as White or Asian/Asian American (73%).

Please see the draft report for a full list of specific results, findings, and recommendations.

Twenty-one (21) total organizations and creative businesses attended a focus group to discuss creative sector space needs, challenges, and opportunities in Bellevue and/or completed a questionnaire about their own space situation. Nineteen (19) total questionnaires were returned. There were some who only attended a focus group or only completed the questionnaire.

Each arts organization or group that completed the questionnaire was unique in their work, space needs, tenure, size, and programs, but there are many shared characteristics:

- Most see a future for themselves in BelRed
- Over half (10) are a nonprofit
- Their tenure is nearly evenly split with 47% (9) in operation for 4 years or less, and another 47% (9) having been operating for 10 years or more
- They are mostly Bellevue based (15) and 3 are in BelRed
- Over half (10) rent short-term space as needed
- 8 have a one-year or longer-term lease
- While most are satisfied with their long-term space, there is less satisfaction with short-term space, particularly: working studios and event/festival space
- Long-term working studios in BelRed are of strong interest (13)

- 61% (11) would lease the long-term space they need as soon as it became available, and another 8 would be ready within 2 years
- Shared space is of overwhelming interest. (89%) 16 would consider sharing or sub-leasing space. Currently only 3 share/sub-lease their long-term space.

## **NEXT STEPS**

City staff will incorporate the data presented in the Arts Market Study, Technical Report, and earlier Preliminary Feasibility Study into a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of the Kelley Parcel within the BelRed Arts District into affordable housing and commercial space centering the creative community. Current estimates on the development timeline would see the project breaking ground in 2028, but it should be noted that many factors could alter that timeline to be shorter or longer.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Draft Arts Market Study by Artspace Consulting

Attachment B: Draft Technical Report by Artspace Consulting

## **STAFF CONTACT**

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