

So, what is the Creative District anyway?

The Creative District program was developed by the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) in 2019 as a way to support arts-driven economic activity. It is also a placemaking initiative, meaning it is focused on highlighting a specific area's unique assets as they relate to its culture, history, and environment.

Port Townsend's Creative District was certified in 2020. It includes Uptown, Downtown, and Fort Worden. There are currently 20 Creative Districts in the State and several more communities working towards certification. Some neighboring districts include Coupeville, Langley, Bremerton, and Bainbridge.

What does it mean to be a Certified Creative District?

Short term:

- ★ Recognition as a creative community by ArtsWA
- ★ Networking and idea sharing with other districts
- ★ Highway signage from WSDOT
- ★ Annual opportunity for a capital project grant
- ★ Engine for driving creative projects at the community level

Long term:

- ★ Strengthening creative identity as path towards advocating for artists' needs
- ★ Attracting artists and economic opportunities in the creative sector
- ★ Increasing year-round visitors for arts and culture events and attractions
- ★ Leverage for funding and redevelopment opportunities

ArtsWA = the Washington State Arts Commission. A state agency, formed by the Washington State Legislature in 1961 whose mission is to nurture and support the role of the arts in the lives of all Washingtonians.

Placemaking = a process and philosophy that uses urban design principles, either officially or through grassroots action, such as extending sidewalks with chalk, paint, and planters, or having public events. Good placemaking enhances the urban experience at pedestrian scale through making use of underutilized space.

Creative District = a state designation for creative communities that are able to demonstrate and maintain a strong artistic identity and economy.

Each Creative District chooses its own activities and focus. Port Townsend defined six artistic disciplines so that a wide breadth of the creative community has a stake in the work of the district. Its primary goal is to support a thriving year-round economy for artists. The geographic footprint includes areas of concentrated commercial and creative activity, but the resources of the Creative District are designed to serve the whole community.



PT Creative District Accomplishments

Operational

- ★ Led by Port Townsend Main Street and a dedicated subcommittee, plus a separate volunteer team coordinating the Soundcheck arts festival
- ★ Hired a part-time temporary Creative District Manager 2024
- ★ Transitioned from Main Street to City of Port Townsend under the Community Services Department 2024-2025
- ★ Hired fulltime Arts & Culture Coordinator at the City of Port Townsend 2025

Digital

- ★ Creative District website:
<https://ptcreativedistrict.org/>
- ★ Monthly Creative District eNewsletter
- ★ Artists Directory by Harmonic Northwest:
<https://ptcreativedistrict.org/artists/>

Infrastructure

- ★ Wayfinding/Art Markers
- ★ Tyler Street Lighting Project
- ★ Highway Creative District Signs

Events

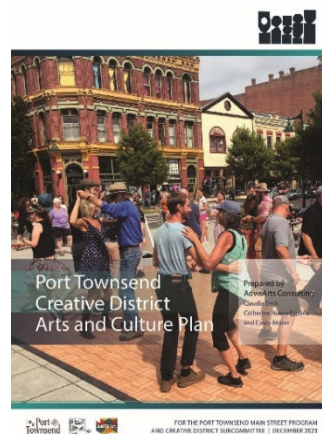
- ★ Promoting, rebranding and reinvigorating the monthly Saturday ArtWalk
- ★ Soundcheck Arts Festival in August 2022, 2023, 2024
- ★ Nexus monthly artist

Planning

- ★ Arts & Culture Plan 2023-2024 with input of artists and community led by AdvisArts Consultants

Connections/Recognition

- ★ Featured in an MRSC blog: *Using Arts and Culture to Revitalize Downtowns*
- ★ Hosting the Creative District Convening 2023, the first in person since the pandemic
- ★ Arts and Culture Plan won the Excellence on Main “Economic Opportunity” award at the 2024 Washington State Main Street Conference



What are the Creative District's goals?

VOICE	Strengthen the role and voice of the creative sector in City of Port Townsend and Jefferson County public and private sectors to achieve community goals and ensure Port Townsend's identity as a vibrant arts community
WORK	Support jobs, paid project work, and workforce training opportunities that reinforce key Creative District Arts and Culture Plan goals and build a stronger future as an arts community
AWARENESS	Expand and coordinate communication and marketing to build awareness and access for creatives and audiences in three dimensions: (A.) creative to creative information sharing, (B.) creative to marketplace opportunities, and (C.) arts marketplace opportunities reaching residents and visitor audiences
RESOURCES	Provide creatives with exemplary resources to help them thrive professionally and enrich the Creative District and Port Townsend community
COLLABORATION	Link together existing arts and cultural events and activities in the Creative District and experiment with new endeavors to amplify impact for artists and audiences
SPACE	Encourage and incentivize use of physical space in the Creative District for creative endeavors, expanding opportunities for artists and artisans and increasing access for audiences

Who is working towards these goals?

The artists, arts organizations, creative businesses, and civic partners that are making our area a vibrant place for art!

Implementation Workgroup (coming soon!)

- Artist Directory
- ArtWalk
- Soundcheck

City Community Services Department

- Municipal home for the Creative District
 - Katy Goodman, Arts & Culture Coordinator
 - Melody Sky Weaver, Department Director

LTAC (Lodging Tax Advisory Committee)

- Advisory to City Council for using hotel tax dollars to promote visitation
 - Advertising
 - Event support
 - Content creation
 - Web/online assets
 - Events Grants

PTAC (Port Townsend Arts Commission)

- Advisory to City Council for the arts
 - Public Art/Municipal Arts Fund
 - Art Awards
 - Poet Laureate
 - Arts Grants

What are ways we achieve these goals?

