

**WILMINGTON
RENAISSANCE
CORPORATION**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CREATIVE DISTRICT VISION LEADERSHIP

The Creative District Vision plan was generously funded by JPMorgan Chase and United Way of Delaware. The plan was led by Wilmington Renaissance Corporation [WRC] and a committed Steering Committee comprised of local stakeholders and representatives of arts and cultural organizations, financial institutions, city agencies, civic groups, and institutions.

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PREFACE

In 2010, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation, Christina Cultural Arts Center, and the City of Wilmington began to explore the idea of establishing artist live/work housing in Quaker Hill, the historic neighborhood immediately west of downtown. Over time, the list of partners grew and the conversation evolved from a single development project into a vision for a Creative District that links the cultural assets of Market Street to the Quaker Hill community.

Building on the successful completion of Wilmington's first artist live/work facility, Shipley Lofts; the millions of dollars invested by both the public and private sector to revitalize Market Street; as well as a long legacy of arts-based initiatives in the same area, this Creative District Vision Plan looks to expand the social and cultural experience of Market Street beyond a single corridor and into an approximately 25 block creative community. It identifies place-based strategies to redevelop and revitalize a historic community utilizing arts, culture, and creative industries in a manner that will not only improve the quality of life in Quaker Hill, but also help bring critical mass to downtown and support the ongoing efforts of local artists and arts and cultural institutions to make Wilmington a celebrated and well-known artistic and creative destination location.

This plan is meant to be a living document that will evolve as more discussions take place, new partnerships are created, and potential funding becomes available. As implementation progresses, the recommendations and priorities in this plan will continuously be re-evaluated to adapt to changes on the ground. Wilmington is a city rich with cultural assets and we believe this vision plan will help those assets play an even greater role in making Wilmington a more beautiful, livable, and economically prosperous city.

WRC and its partners invite you to be a part of this vision and to support its evolution and development.

Sincerely,



Carrie W. Gray
Managing Director
Wilmington Renaissance Corporation





INTRODUCTION

The combined impacts of public and private investment and public policy over the past thirty years have brought transformative change to Wilmington's greater downtown area, with corporate investment in Center City and the Riverfront Wilmington redevelopment bookending the smaller scale, more incremental revitalization of LOMA [lower Market Street]. This continued building of momentum in parts of Wilmington's downtown is contrasted by the persistent challenges faced by nearby neighborhoods just beyond the reach of this reinvestment.

As seen in cities across the Country with revived downtowns, the success of past initiatives is an opportunity to expand in new directions. Wilmington has a long legacy of arts organizations and creative businesses. Those that are familiar with the City are well aware of the local benefits provided by major arts institutions as well as small creative non-profits organizations. This vision for a Creative District is about expanding and promoting a local resource that is often overlooked. With proactive guidance and investment, an established Creative District can help to improve local communities and the City's overall economic position.



[Study area context map.]

SUCCESS STORIES: Urban reinvestment in Wilmington's downtown area

Downtown Investment

With an emphasis on historic preservation, the promotion of the arts, and economic development, the redevelopment efforts in downtown Wilmington over the past few decades have built upon the historic, cultural, and economic assets of the city. The City of Wilmington has played a critical role as a supportive legislator and municipal funder alongside private investors in many of these efforts.

The favorable tax climate established by the 1981 Financial Center Development Act has effected a lasting definition of the character and identity of Wilmington's Central Business District as a distinct cluster of towers housing primarily corporate headquarters and financial, legal and social services; and campuses housing government offices and the Christiana Care Wilmington Hospital [one of the largest employers in the city]. In 1994, the Wilmington Downtown Business Improvement District (WDBID) was established following the passing of an ordinance by City Council. The BID comprises 70 blocks and over 730 properties, including the Central Business District and all of Market Street between the Christina River and Brandywine Creek.

As a primary commercial corridor in Wilmington, Market Street has seen continued investment in downtown vitality over the past few decades. Historic preservation and rehabilitation has played a primary role in investment efforts. In 1976, several historic buildings were relocated to the 500 block of Market Street to develop Willingtown Square, which is maintained by the Historical Society of Delaware, and the Delaware History Center. The Christina Cultural Arts Center (CCAC) relocated to a green renovated property in the 700 block of Market Street between 1991 and 1992. With a mission to expand access to arts, education, employment, and cultural experiences, CCAC is the largest employer of local artists in the downtown area. It has also set an important and successful precedent for the basis of the Creative District initiative by connecting creative strategies with neighborhood revitalization and economic development.

Additional major renovation projects include Delaware College of Art and Design (DCAD), which was established in 1996 at 600 Market Street in the former Delaware Power and Light building, a National Register Historic Place distinguished by its Art Deco architecture. 1999 saw the redevelopment of a former bank in the 500 block of Market Street to house the Kuumba Academy, a charter school affiliated with CCAC that integrates the arts and academic instruction. In 2000, the Baby



[The Grand Opera House on Market Street.]

Grand, which houses a 300-seat theater in addition to offices, rehearsal rooms, and teaching spaces, was established adjacent to the Grand Opera House, which had been successfully renovated in 1973.

Market Street has also seen investment in its public infrastructure. In 2007, the pedestrian mall on Market Street was decommissioned, thus returning the street to vehicular traffic. Upgrades to public utilities took place as part of the conversion.

Housing has been another target of reinvestment. The redevelopment of the Delaware Trust Building into the Residences at Rodney Square by the Buccini/Pollin Group [BPG] with support from the City of Wilmington was completed in 2003. Also that year, Ships Tavern Mews (now known as the Lofts @ 2nd & LOMA), a \$36 million mixed-use development that included 80-unique loft-style apartments above ground-level retail spaces, was completed with the assistance of an \$11.7 million Multi-Family Revenue Bond issued by the City of Wilmington.

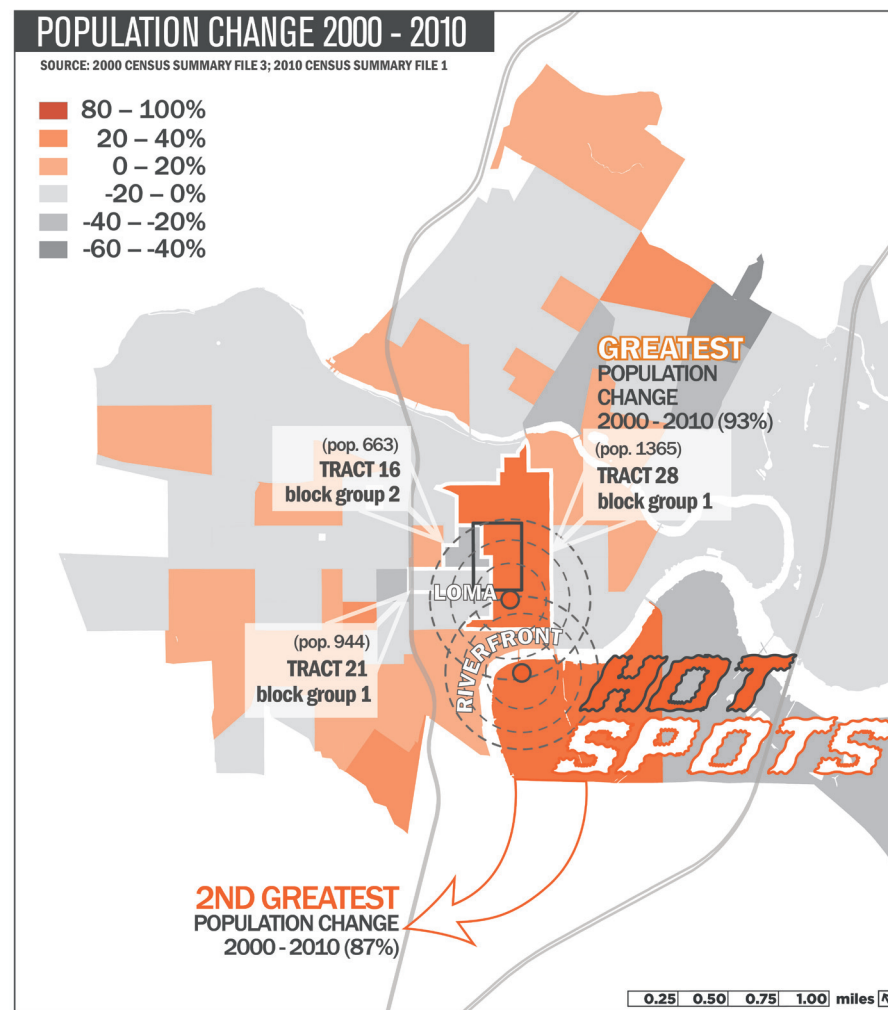
The LOMA Design District, a collaborative effort between developers, local creative professionals, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation, and others, is a rebranding of Market Street from 2nd to 6th Streets that began in 2007 and soon gained traction with visible results in the next few years. Its goal is to attract

creative firms, shops, and people and link the Riverfront to Wilmington's Central Business District, connecting "creativity to commerce" while cultivating a local "creative class."

Linking their investments in the Residences at Rodney Square to their projects at the Riverfront, BPG began a large-scale redevelopment of scattered sites along Market Street with the first phase of the ongoing project completed in 2008. Branded, "The Residences at LOMA," the project was supported by City investment through the \$15 million Upstairs Fund loan-to-grant program established the same year to incentivize rehabilitation of vacant upper stories within the Lower Market Street Historic District.

South of LOMA is the Riverfront Wilmington, a large-scale mixed use redevelopment of a former shipyard area in Wilmington, began in 1996 as a state-funded effort led by the Riverfront Development Corporation [RDC]. It extends roughly 1.2 miles along the Christina River from the Russell Peterson Wildlife Refuge to the Amtrak Station. The development transformed the brownfield into a unique extension of the City, with restaurants, shops, high-end residential, office space, a stadium, open space, and numerous cultural offerings, including the Delaware Theatre Company, the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, and the Delaware Children's Museum. Within its first ten years, the project generated \$67 million in fiscal revenues. By the end of this period, its funding had largely shifted away from public investment, with over 90 percent coming from private sources.

Among many other things, the more recent revitalization and redevelopment efforts have brought a new factor into the equation: attracting middle and upper income residents to buy or rent in Wilmington's greater downtown area. Though the City's population overall suffered a 2.4% loss between 2000 and 2010, Tract 28—comprising the majority of Center City and LOMA, right up to the threshold of Riverfront Wilmington—nearly doubled in population over the same period, the greatest percent growth in Wilmington. Similarly, the same tract currently has the third-highest income in Wilmington, and had the largest percent increase in household median income in Wilmington over the same timeframe. This concentrated influx of higher income earners is helping to support more commercial services—mostly food- and entertainment -related—that primarily serve those new residents in LOMA and Wilmington's reinvented Riverfront.



[2000 - 2010 Percent change in population context map.]

Neighborhood Investment

The City has also focused investments in its neighborhoods outside of the downtown area. Such efforts include Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects in Downtown, the Triangle, Midtown Brandywine, and Trolley Square. These projects target sidewalks, curbs, trees, striping, curbs, among others, with the goal of addressing the cultural, aesthetic, safety, accessibility, and environmental aspects of the transportation system.

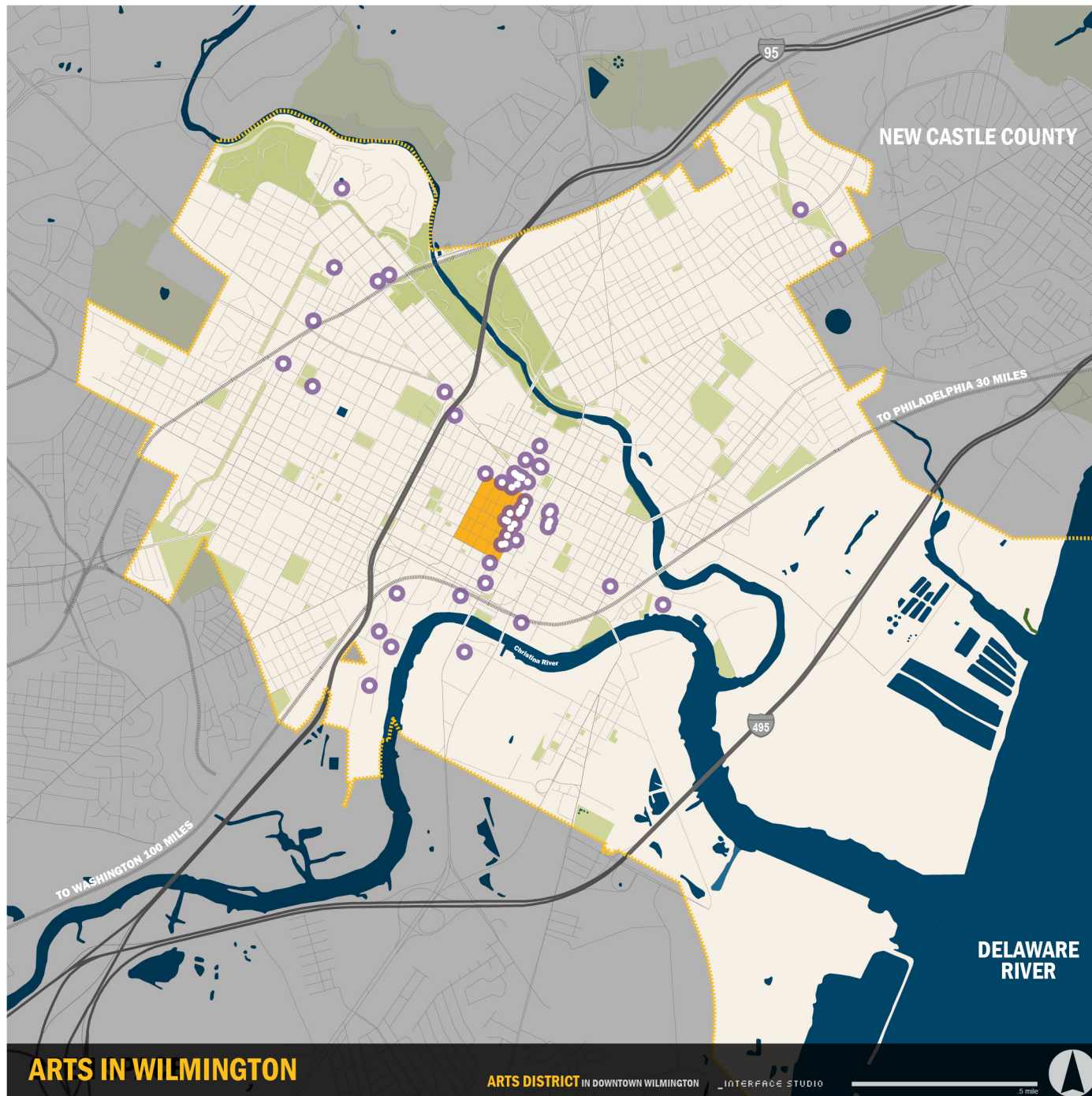
The City has also engaged in efforts to improve parks in its neighborhoods, including Kirkwood Park in East Wilmington and the Cool Spring Reservoir Plaza. In Cool Spring, significant renovations to its reservoir took place between 2006 and 2009. The Plaza has been transformed to include concrete paths, two waterfalls, benches, plants, trees, and flowers around the reservoir tank and adjacent pond.

Developments seeking to increase homeownership and stabilize communities in the city include Eastlake, Franklin Chase, Speakman Place, and the Villas of Little Italy. The lattermost development consists of energy- efficient homes with off-street parking that took the place of an abandoned, blighted restaurant and vacant lot.

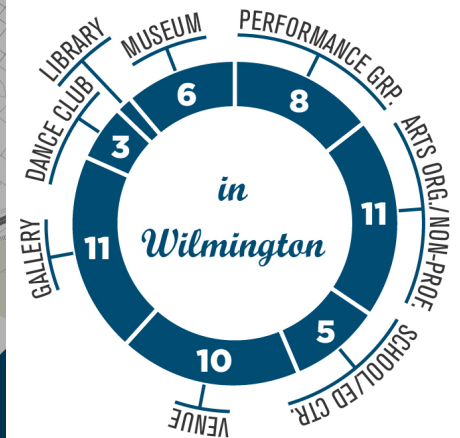


[Above: Cool Spring Reservoir Plaza. Below: Villas of Little Italy.]





Over **50** arts & entertainment venues, groups, & organizations



And roughly **30** more in the surrounding area

- arts & entertainment amenity
- open space
- arts district study area
- city limits
- rail

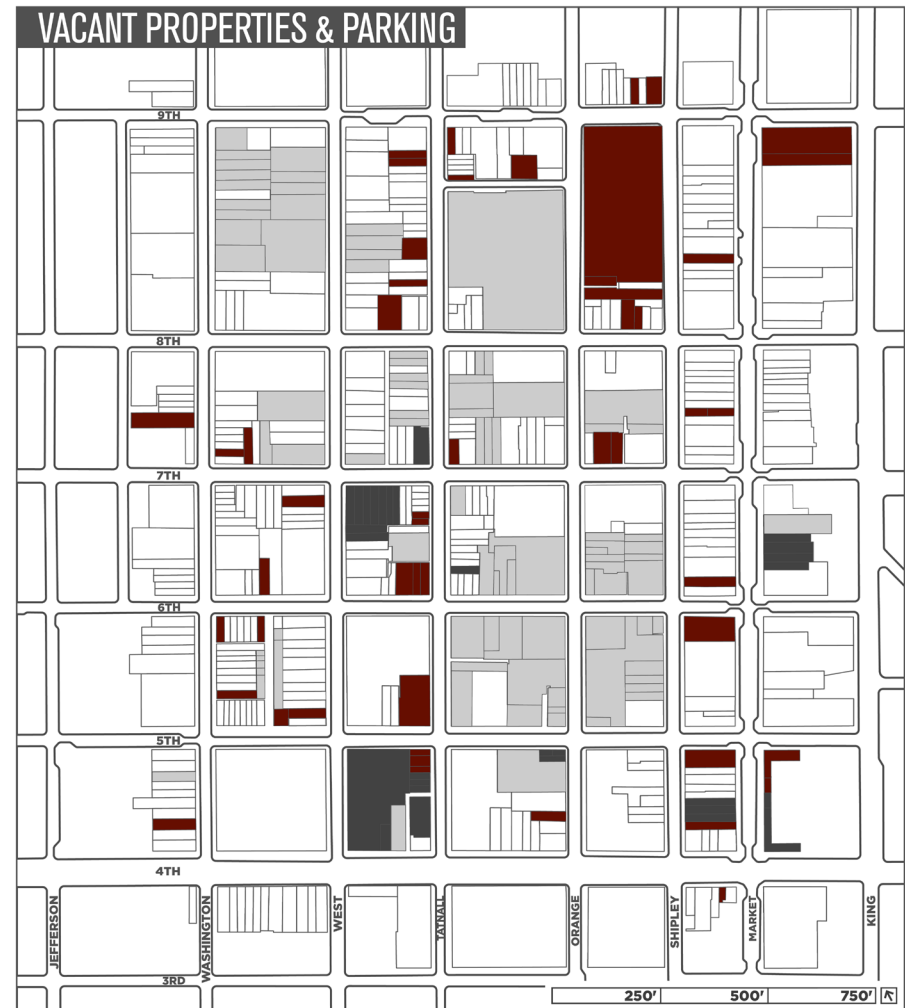
[Context map of arts and entertainment venues, groups, and organizations.]

LOOKING FORWARD: New opportunities for revitalization

The area bounded by Washington, Market, 4th and 9th Streets is strategically positioned to build off of the energy mounting nearby, drawing revitalization westward in a form that strengthens neighborhoods by bringing benefits to existing residents as well as welcoming new neighbors. However, this area currently acts as a large gap between riverfront redevelopment, LOMA, Market Street and the concentration of office workers in Center City. Efforts to carry the momentum of reinvestment into neighborhoods west of Market are faced with a number of challenges—primary among them being the perception of crime, but also persistent social and economic issues. Census data shows that neighborhoods to the west of Center City are significantly less wealthy, younger, and have a lower level of educational attainment. These issues are currently being addressed through local neighborhood revitalization activities including the West Center City Futures initiative.

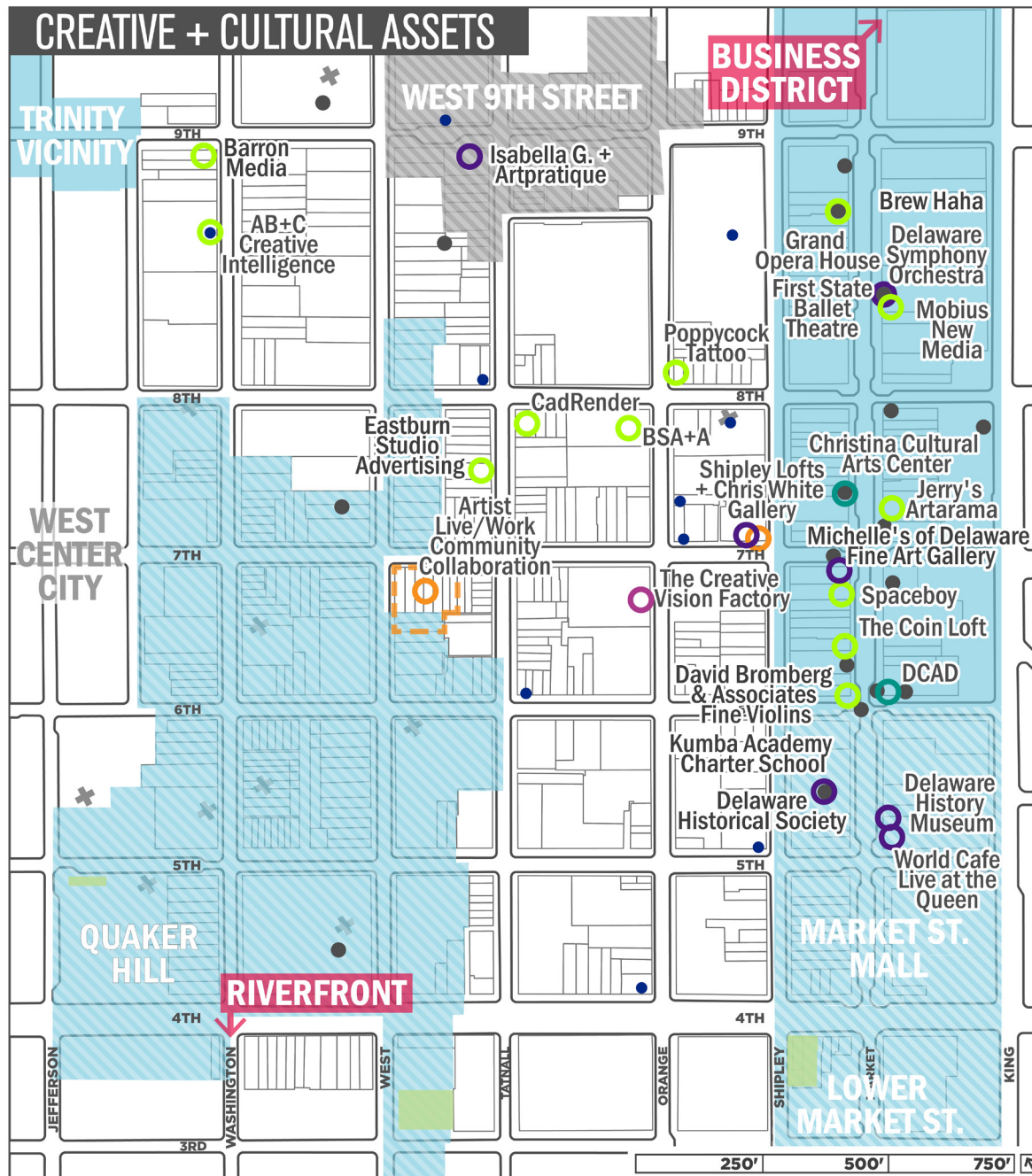
As local residents and the City work to improve local neighborhoods, they remain disconnected from services, jobs and entertainment along Market Street and toward the River. Shipley Street—which in some ways still fulfills its historic role as the alley serving properties facing Market—has acted as a somewhat natural barrier to revitalization. Aside from the historic Quaker Hill neighborhood to the west and south and the 9th Street commercial corridor at its northern edge, the urban fabric and identity of this target area is fragmented and undefined. Almost one third of the area spanning Market to Washington, from 4th to 9th Streets is comprised of vacant land, vacant buildings, or surface parking lots, contributing to a sense of general inactivity and lack of cohesion. At the same time, the vacancy is seen as an opportunity for targeted infill and rehabilitation and the large surface parking lots [constituting one-fifth of the area] present opportunities for longer-term and larger-scale development. Overall, three-quarters of all buildings are in excellent/above average condition; the same proportion of the 54 vacant buildings in the area is in need of significant repair.

Neighborhood amenities are varied within the area. Transportation is easily accessible from the district, with the Amtrak station, Rodney Square, and I-95 only a few minutes away. However, despite the area's convenience to public transportation, the system itself underperforms. The area's lack of open space, which has a negative impact on quality of life, the environment, and may negatively influence property values. Commercial services are highly limited for many nearby residents, as a number of businesses cater to higher income earners.



- parking
- vacant building
- vacant land

[Vacant and undeveloped land comprises one-third of the study area]

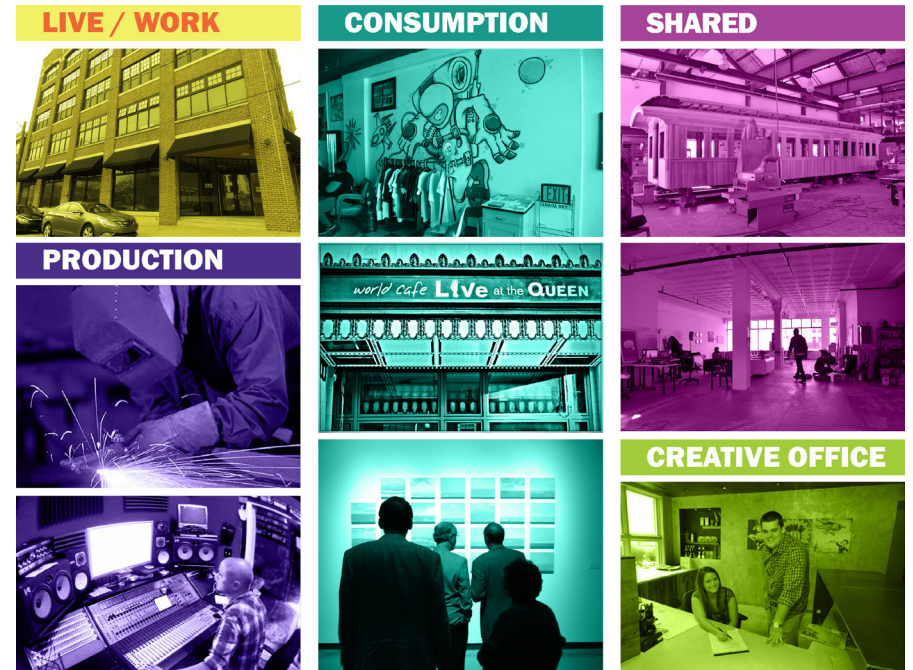


[The study area has numerous creative and cultural uses, particularly along Market. These include artist live/work housing, advertising firms, an art store, a co-working space, and a violin sales and repair shop. Additionally, three historic districts extend into the study area: the Quaker Hill district includes a historic Quaker meeting house and many historic townhomes. The two historic districts along Market house historic townhomes, stores, and venues, some of which are National Register historic properties, in particular in between Sixth and Ninth streets.]

On any given weekday, Wilmington's population of 72,000 increases by roughly 45,000. At the end of the day, when the commuter population migrates out of Wilmington, the shift in the energy of the City is palpable. Most businesses close when Center City office workers leave for the day—and many don't hold weekend hours at all.

Despite these challenges, the area is located near the densest clusters of Wilmington's arts and cultural organizations. Market Street is anchored by three historic destination venues—DuPont Theatre, the Grand, the newly restored Queen—and is also home to the Delaware History Museum, Delaware College of Art and Design, Christina Cultural Arts Center, and a number of smaller scale art and cultural entities. This is one of the area's greatest and most distinct assets: its proximity to the many creative, cultural, and institutional organizations, venues, and businesses that have a notable presence in the area. This presence extends well into the study area itself, with a range of creative commercial spaces, arts and cultural organizations, to religious organizations with arts programming, and educational institutions. These assets help form a strong foundation for the concept of building on the greater area's emerging identity as a Creative District.

In addition to forming the basis for a revitalization strategy for this fragmented pause between Market Street and neighborhoods to the west of Center City, reinvesting in this area as a Creative District could also strengthen the north-south connection initiated by LOMA between the Riverfront and the central business district. To that point, looking beyond the study area itself, the gap between 4th Street and Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard presents additional future opportunities for public and private investment to knit together the urban fabric to establish vital connections within the greater downtown area.



[Typologies of creative production and consumption.]

CREATIVE DISTRICT VISION

Much more robust than a traditional concept for an “arts” district, the Creative District vision seeks to accommodate the arts along with a more comprehensive range of creative endeavors. In order to build critical mass in the Creative District, attracting creative professionals and makers from the greater Wilmington area and beyond, the vision must embrace and support everyone from visual artists [painters, sculptors, writers, film makers, illustrators, printmakers, etc.], to performance artists [actors, musicians, comedians, etc.], to technical innovators [programming and development entrepreneurs, bloggers, web designers, etc.], to designers [graphic, architecture, planning, interior, clothing, etc.], to craftspeople [artisanal manufacturers, welders, woodworkers, etc.] to marketing strategists, engineers, research and development consultants—essentially anyone whose profession harnesses their creative capacity to innovate and create.

As the resident population immediately in and around the district is varied, it is important that the district itself serves the diverse interests represented in the area. Central to the concept of the creative district is the idea of merging the arts and creative culture with that of community, working to eliminate the perceived divide between the economy of arts and culture tourism and the needs and desires of local residents.



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VISION STATEMENT: Laying a foundation for Wilmington's Creative District

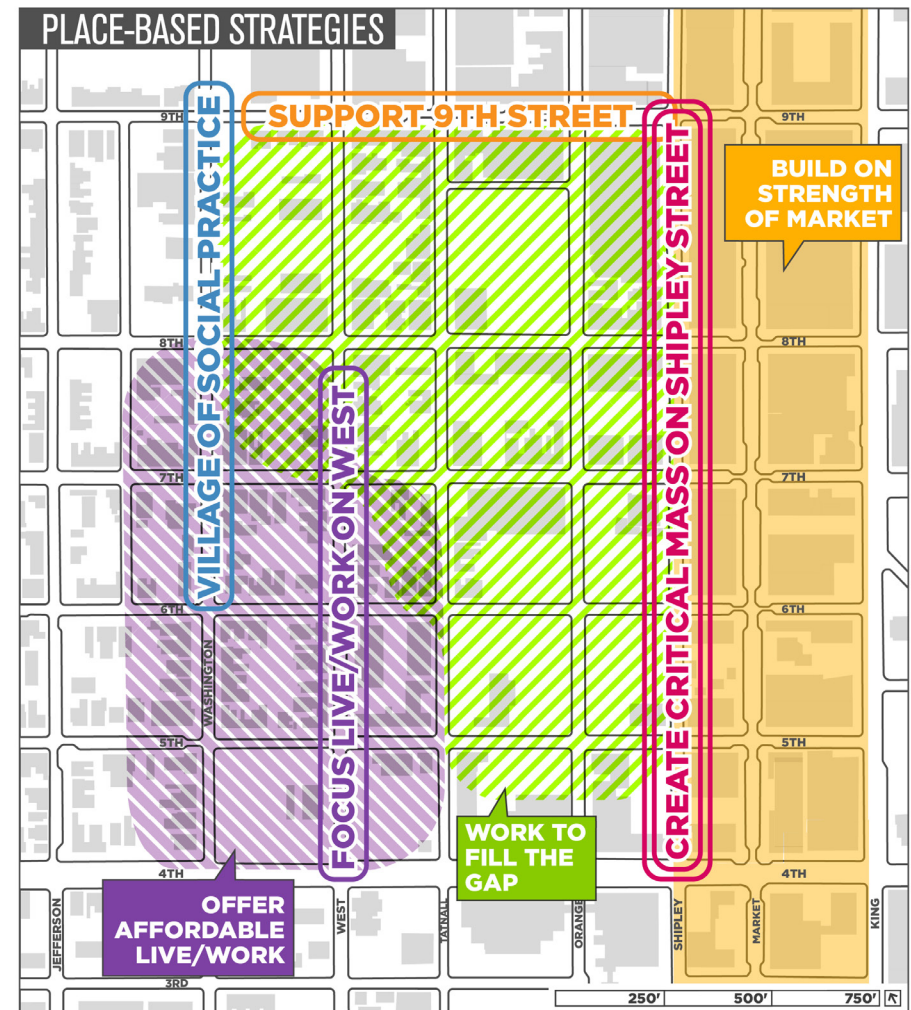
Wilmington is a **CREATIVE HUB** that attracts artists, designers, entrepreneurs, makers, manufacturers, and others from the **LOCAL AREA** and **BEYOND**. The Creative District concept is equally focused on both **CREATIVE PRODUCTION** and **CONSUMPTION**: a **WORKING DISTRICT** where locally designed goods and original works are made and local creative entrepreneurs are supported, as well as a **DESTINATION** drawing in visitors looking for a unique experience.

The Creative District is the heart of this vibrant and collaborative community. Its creative identity reflects and **CELEBRATES DIVERSITY** in the city and of its residents and visitors. This **IDENTITY IS VISIBLE** throughout the entire district, enhancing its physical environment and informing residents and visitors of **ACTIVITIES** and **EVENTS**.

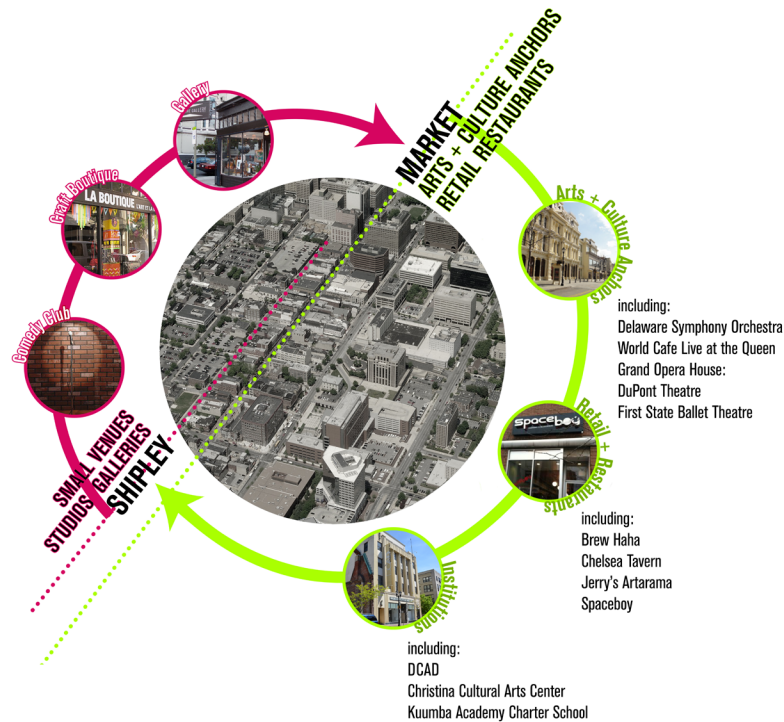
With housing choice, support for entrepreneurial endeavors, and strong ties to local business, the District is a place to both **LIVE AND WORK**. In addition, inspiration is a medium to **ADDRESS SOCIAL NEEDS**, with outlets that **ENCOURAGE YOUTH** to explore their creativity and support those facing physical and personal challenges, among others.

PLACE-BASED STRATEGIES: A framework to guide targeted initiatives

Cultivating the Creative District will require an incremental approach enabling it to take root over time. Subsequent chapters detail a number of strategies to establish the Creative District organized according to thematically related and phased actions. As a preface to those recommendations and to translate the vision to the specific cultural and built landscape of the study area, the opportunities for targeted place-based strategies are as follows:



[The main strategies behind the Creative District plan that build on the area's strengths: a historic commercial corridor along Ninth; a strong cultural and commercial corridor along Market; historic housing in and around West; and a cluster of social services along Washington.]



[The identity of Market and future identity of Shipley will work together well. Market has larger-scale cultural anchors; the venues on Shipley will be smaller-scale and complementary in nature.]

Creating a creative community in Quaker Hill

Given the demographic profile of the area as well as the understanding that emerging artists need affordable options both for housing and production space, creating low-cost live/work options in the Creative District is key. The historic Quaker Hill neighborhood presents a number of opportunities for infill development and rehabilitation of vacant residential or mixed use buildings, concentrated on or near West Street.

Establishing critical mass along Shipley Street

A new vision for Shipley Street to become the backbone of creative culture in the area is one that could serve as part of an integral and mutually reinforcing relationship with Market Street. Market is currently defined by its retail and distinguished by the historic arts and cultural

venues anchoring the street. Reimagining and rebranding Shipley as a corridor where smaller scale creative culture—including opportunities for live/work, programming through events and temporary installations, galleries, and small-scale venues—can emerge could effect a powerful symbiosis between Shipley and Market. The concept would harmonize and reinforce the emerging creative culture growing out of LOMA and the long-standing Market Street cultural and retail corridor.

Focusing art-based social practice programs on Washington Street

A number of social service programs are clustered along Washington Street. Community members, city officials, non-profit and business leaders, have been engaged in ongoing conversations regarding the impact of these services, which address social, economic, and health-related issues. An effort to improve perception and increase awareness of the positive impacts of these entities, paired with partnerships to integrate art-based social practice programs within a “village” of such organizations could help reverse perception and make their positive influence on the neighborhood more visible, while also improving the impact of social services and providing more skills training for employment and job re-entry.



Filling in the “gap”

Large swaths of the study area’s interior are comprised of surface parking lots. As the market position of the area continues to improve, property owners may be motivated to explore other options for these parcels. Longer-term development opportunities could serve the Creative District vision in a number of ways, including accommodating a larger footprint anchor arts and cultural institution or creative production facilities.



- parking
- vacant building
- vacant land

[20 percent of the study area is vacant or undeveloped land. Several larger clusters of this type of land could accommodate larger footprint development in the future.]

BENEFITS & IMPACTS: Positive outcomes of investing in creative culture

Implementation of the Creative District plan will have a range of impacts bringing both economic and social benefits.

Potential social impacts of the creative district

The introduction of creativity-based programming and policies in isolation will not tackle the social challenges faced by neighborhoods in Wilmington. Creative efforts in the District should serve as avenues to address issues relating to quality of life. Through social practice, or bringing social goals, cultural values, and community engagement into the creative disciplines, the Creative District can reinforce and expand programming that engages underserved communities.

Artists and “non-artists” can work together to address and raise awareness of social issues affecting Wilmington, including drug use, crime, poverty, drugs, poor housing conditions, youth delinquency, unemployment, and access to quality health care. Engagement in arts-based activities and events fortifies existing social networks and creates additional ones as well. This is particularly important to those with limited social capital, as may be the case in more socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods throughout the city.

Further, through involvement in one’s community—be it through participating in a collaborative project or event—residents will gain a sense of ownership. Unique enhancements to the physical environment, e.g. through things like artistic street furniture on both prominent and less-prominent corridors and murals on the District’s currently blank sidewalls, could foster a shared sense of place and belonging, especially in parts of the District with limited visual appeal. Increased personal investment in one’s community coupled with the deepening of social ties could have numerous additional benefits, including a reduction in crime, which currently presents a great challenge to Wilmington.

The Creative District has the potential to empower local residents, create jobs, and strengthen the local economy. Incubators and shared facilities could provide skills training and access to facilities and resources one may not be able to afford individually. This training and access creates economic opportunities for individuals regardless of level of

educational attainment or current employment standing. These facilities can expand their programs as they mature to offer additional resources to communities, such low-cost residence programs and classes for at-risk youth and young mothers. This type of programming is important given the demographic trends apparent in the city, as it presents an opportunity to cultivate desirable skills for job placement. Further, as implementation of the District’s programs and policies progresses, more job opportunities will become available for or be generated by those with creative skills and training.

Moreover, these incubators and facilities could carve a niche out for Wilmington: if high-quality incubator and shared-work spaces are available in the city, residents from the surrounding area may be more inclined to make use of them instead of traveling the extra distance to Philadelphia or other cities.

Additionally, through social practice, or bringing social goals, cultural values, and community engagement into the creative disciplines, creative districts reinforce and expand programming that engages underserved communities. Artists and “non-artists” can work together to address and raise awareness of social issues affecting Wilmington, including drug use, crime, poverty, drugs, poor housing conditions, youth delinquency, unemployment, and access to quality health care.

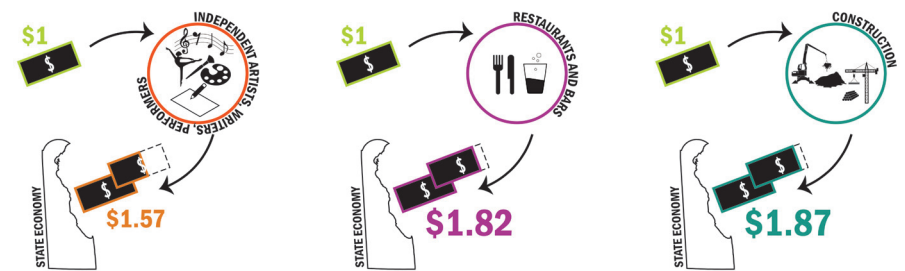
Potential economic impacts of the creative district

The economic benefits of implementing the Creative District vision will be generated by construction of new housing, facilities and public improvements in the target area as well as the increase in arts patronage and attendance that could be expected to grow out of the increased sense of identity and vibrancy in the neighborhood. All investments in implementation will have positive direct and indirect “spin-off” impacts. Every \$1.00 in construction expenditures during implementation will generate \$1.87 in economic impact in the State of Delaware. Moreover, every \$1 million in new construction expenditures creates 11.7 jobs during the construction period and adds more than \$512,000 in earnings to Delaware households. An energized Creative

District is likely to attract spending on entertainment, made objects and dining that would have taken place in Philadelphia or other areas out of state, thus creating net new impacts for the State. On average, attendees at Delaware arts venues spend \$29.80 every time they attend a performance or visit a cultural institution, and these expenditures trickle through the state's economy creating new jobs and increasing household earnings. Additional payments to artists, performers and other creative professionals adds \$1.57 to the state economy for each \$1.00 of expenditure. Every \$1 million spent purchasing goods and services from independent artists, writers and performers supports more than 15 jobs and results in additional household earnings of more than \$412,000 annually. Similarly, increasing activity at restaurants and bars, a likely outcome of a more vibrant creative district in downtown Wilmington, creates \$1.82 of economic activity in Delaware for every \$1.00 spent. In addition, every \$1 million in new expenditures at restaurants and bars supports 19.6 jobs and increases household earnings by an estimated \$473,000.

Each new residence developed in the Creative District will generate City, County and School District property tax revenues after any abatements expire. For the homeownership units envisioned in the plan, annual City, County and school district property taxes are estimated to total at least \$2,000 per unit. Home sales will also generate incremental transfer tax revenue to the City of Wilmington and the State. Residents moving to the District from outside of Wilmington will also generate net new earned income tax and per capita tax revenues for the City. Investments in improving the neighborhood's housing stock should help to support and increase property values in surrounding blocks, adding to the local real estate tax base.

Implementation of the Creative District will raise the profile of arts venues and organizations in and around the target area which may allow them to expand their programming. Every \$100,000 of spending by arts organizations [not including their audiences/visitors] creates the following impacts in Delaware: 2.7 full time equivalent jobs, more than \$81,000 in earnings and nearly \$7,000 in local and state tax revenues.



[Economic impacts of creative industries and complementary industries per dollar invested.]

AT A GLANCE:

What:

A live/work creative district that leverages existing artistic and cultural assets to redevelop the surrounding neighborhood

Why:

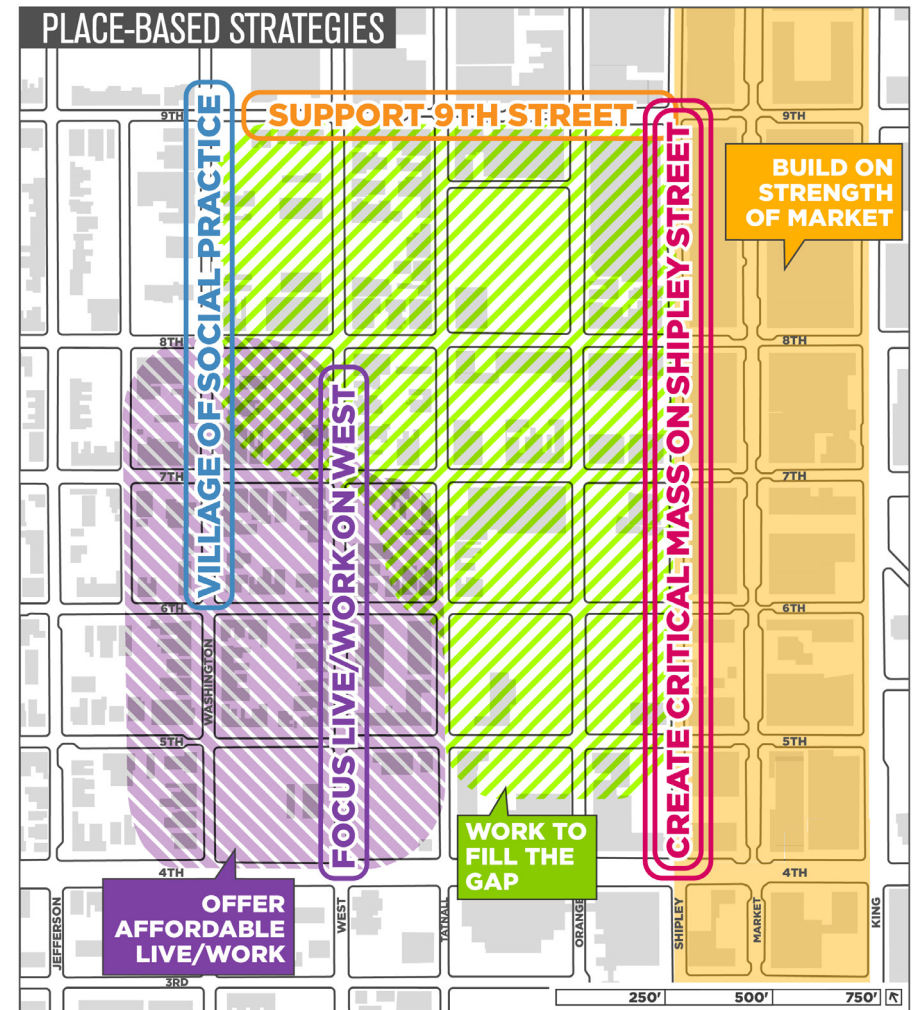
- Celebrate the arts and cultural assets of the city
- Counter disinvestment
- Support business and create job opportunities
- Preserve historic properties
- Improve quality of life for existing residents
- Improve health and livability of the Quaker Hill community
- Promote homeownership
- Reduce crime and violence
- Spread investment to other areas of downtown
- Leverage the arts and creative industries to generate a positive economic impact
- Foster connections between residents and arts community
- Address social needs
- Establish Wilmington as a destination

Where:

Market to Washington and 4th to 9th streets

How:

Through partnerships between city officials, active figures in the arts and creative communities, foundations, and residents.



[The main strategies behind the Creative District plan that build on the area's strengths: a historic commercial corridor along Ninth; a strong cultural and commercial corridor along Market; historic housing in and around West; and a cluster of social services along Washington.]

RECOMMENDATION AREAS

ORGANIZE: ESTABLISH DISTRICT DESIGNATION and MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Successful creative districts around the country are the result of overlapping interests and investments dedicated to attracting and growing the local creative economy. To create a home base for Wilmington's creative enterprises and artists, new partnerships are needed to generate momentum and a critical mass of activity around this vision. These strategies create sustainable leadership for the district, attract artists and creative businesses, market the district and actively program events to help strengthen the area's identity. These components are essential to realizing the goals of new development and local economic growth that supports the revitalization of downtown Wilmington and surrounding neighborhoods.

1

CULTIVATE COMMUNITY: PROMOTE STRONG NETWORKS and SOCIAL CAPITAL

Building a creative district isn't just about events and bricks and mortar. It's the social and professional networks that truly define a place. Investing in the connections between artists, innovators, and makers—as well as those between the creative community and local neighborhoods—lays the foundation for the Creative District Vision. The recommendations are geared toward establishing those strong ties, as well as setting policies and enacting programs to welcome and support emerging artists and creative entrepreneurs.

2

PLACEMAKING: BRING INSPIRATION to the STREETS

What's the vibe of the Creative District and how can we communicate that through streetscape elements and public realm improvements to form a unique District experience? The District identity—and, therefore, the character of the streets—should be distinct from other parts of Wilmington and particularly distinct from the traditional main street aesthetic of Market Street, given its very close proximity. Public investment in streetscape and public realm improvements are necessary means to the end of not only creating a sense of arrival and a sense of place in the District, but also leveraging private investment in development opportunities.

3

MAKE SPACE for CREATIVITY: GUIDE DEVELOPMENT to SUPPORT CREATIVE PRODUCTION and CONSUMPTION

Cultivating a stronger creative scene requires finding additional space for both creative production [studios, workshops, and shared facilities] and creative consumption [galleries, performance venues, and event spaces]. Strong leadership, buy-in from private investors, and cooperation with City agencies is needed to lay the foundation for facilitating this type of development, which will require a combination of public and private investment. A range of targeted strategies will establish new spaces to accommodate creative production and consumption within the Creative District.

4

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

This Vision for Wilmington's Creative District was developed under the guidance of Wilmington Renaissance Corporation and a diverse Steering Committee comprised of institutional partners, artists, Downtown stakeholders and City representatives. The discussions generated during this process reveal the growing level of interest in establishing a visible home for Wilmington's creative industries.

The recommendations that resulted from this process include a full spectrum of ideas that range from lower-cost solutions that can be implemented quickly with the time and energy of WRC and their partners to more visionary projects that will require extensive fundraising and close coordination with the City and private interests to accomplish over a longer timeframe.

To address the range of strategies contained in this Vision, different implementation strategies with different partners are required to best align local resources and capacity to the task at hand. Implementation will require a combination of an organized and committed implementation entity, engaged stakeholders, and the partnership of City and State agencies, local institutions, private foundations and developers.

This plan is a living document. It can and should evolve as more discussions take place, new partnerships are created, and potential funding becomes available. As implementation progresses, the recommendations and priorities in this plan should continuously be re-evaluated to adapt to changes on the ground.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

The WRC and the Creative District Steering Committee will need to take several important next steps in the coming months to jumpstart implementation activities. These steps will serve to ensure that participants stay involved and that potential partners embrace an active role in the plan's implementation.

Present the plan to local foundations

The next immediate step is to submit the plan to local and regional foundations for implementation support. Foundation support and investment is essential to help further collaboration among local creative businesses and institutions to make this vision a reality.

Present the plan to the City

Ongoing coordination with City representatives is necessary to ensure that this Vision supports the City's goals with regard to Downtown and economic development. Although City representatives participated in Steering Committee discussions, this Vision should be formally presented to the City's Department of Planning, City Council, and the Mayor's Office for further discussion. Copies of the plan should also be submitted to the Department of License and Inspection, Department of Public Works, Department of Real Estate and Housing, Department of Economic Development, Wilmington Police Department, Wilmington Initiatives, and DelDOT, to bring in the expertise of these agencies and develop partnerships for implementation.

Market the plan to attract volunteers and funding

Printed copies of the Executive Summary and electronic copies of the full plan should be distributed to neighborhood organizations, local partners, and foundations. Use media outlets, including print, radio, TV, and online and social media to further spread the word.

Formalize a Creative District Alliance

The Steering Committee should evolve from a planning entity to an implementation body called the Creative District Alliance (as described in Chapter 1 of this Vision). The Creative District Alliance would be tasked with coordinating the activities of this plan and working with City agencies, potential funders, and private partners. As an early step, the Alliance can operate in name only with staff support from WRC but serious consideration should be given to either establishing the Alliance as a separate non-profit or as a formal entity under WRC. Regardless of the

organizational structure, the Alliance should have its own identity, brand and on-line presence as a one-stop shop for creative industries in Wilmington.

The Creative District Alliance will meet at least three times a year over the next five years to guide the implementation of this Vision by prioritizing projects, tracking plan implementation milestones, and coordinating the activities of the various partners leading each initiative.

PHASING AND PRIORITIES

The following pages comprise a selection of the Vision's strategies. Recognizing that resources are limited, it is important to identify the priority projects that should become the focus of the Creative District Alliance. At the end of the planning process, Interface Studio ran a priority exercise with Steering Committee members. While there were some varying ideas about what could or should happen first, there was a clear consensus amongst the stakeholders strategies:

1. Cultivate a strong network around creativity (establish a Creative District Alliance)
2. Develop a sustainable fiscal structure
3. Coordinate change with the Creative District Vision (link to existing plans and initiatives)
4. Establish a creative district zoning overlay
5. Set forth guidelines for live/work and creative production spaces
6. Develop a targeted marketing strategy
7. Hold a district logo design competition
8. Encourage organizations and businesses to hire local artists
9. Formalize an artist and creative business recruitment strategy
10. Create more activity after business hours and on weekends
11. Turn up the volume on Art Loop
12. Expand programming to integrate creativity into social services
13. Make use of blank walls to create an outdoor gallery throughout the District
14. Implement streetscape enhancements along Shipley Street (4th to 9th Streets)
15. Pursue short term solutions to improve lighting
16. Temporarily repurpose vacant land to promote District vitality
17. Feature work of local talent through outdoor projections and installations
18. Advocate for preservation and reuse of historic buildings
19. Pursue scattered site infill and rehabilitation for affordable live/work units in Quaker Hill

Priority status is indicated with the **PRIORITY** symbol.

Recommendations that should be implemented in the short term [next two years] are identified with the **NOW** symbol.

ORGANIZE

NOW Establish the Creative District Alliance

Representatives of local business associations, community based organizations, and institutions; artists and creative professionals; artisanal manufacturers and owners of creative industries; and so on, should be recruited as members of the Creative District Alliance not only to work collaboratively in cultivating and promoting creative culture in the district, but to serve as liaisons to their own networks.

PRIORITY Develop a sustainable fiscal structure

This plan identifies the necessary actions and players to help foster a vibrant creative district. To carry out this plan's recommendations, the Creative District Alliance will require dedicated, multi-year funding streams to support an annual operating budget for district management, staffing and programming under the WRC umbrella. Larger capital projects such as development or streetscape enhancements will require specific fundraising efforts from a combination of public and private sources.

NOW Coordinate change with the Creative District Vision

Coordination and cooperation with decision makers will also ensure that the interests and objectives represented within the Creative District Vision are considered as factors in ongoing planning and development efforts and other influences in the area. These include the following:

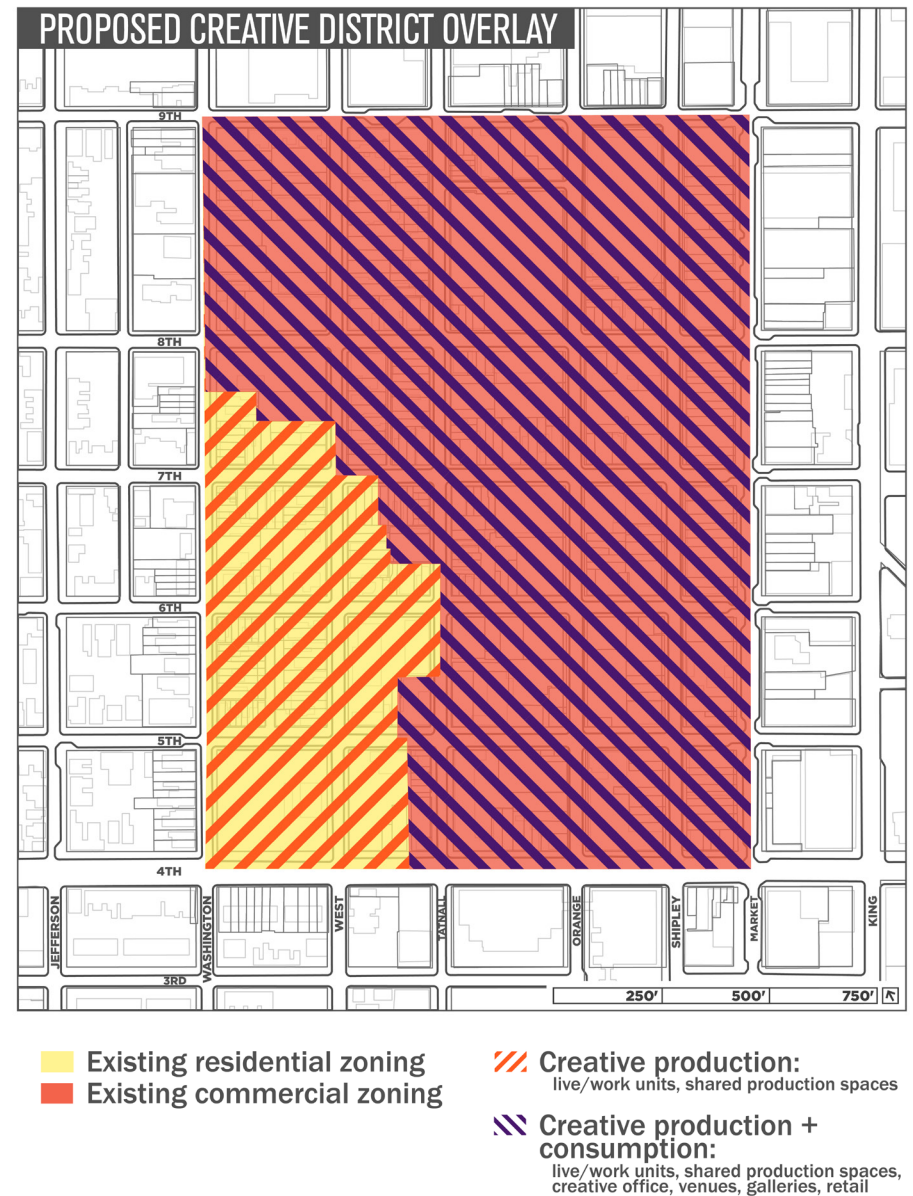
1. Delaware Greenways trail connection to the Riverfront
2. DART/DelDOT bus circulation planning
3. West Center City Futures Council planning efforts
4. Connections interest in dissolving some its holdings
5. Mid-town parking garage future development
6. Planned Shipley Street streetscape improvements from 4th to 7th Streets
7. 9th Street streetscape improvement plan
8. Upstairs Fund efforts by Downtown Visions
9. Wilmington Housing Partnership & Wilmington Housing Authority redevelopment efforts
10. Potential Capital One 360 expansion plans
11. Wilmington Hospital expansion
12. DCAD student housing and campus services expansion

NOW Establish a creative district zoning overlay

Wilmington's zoning code currently lacks a classification allowing a mix of residential and light industrial uses, which would be necessary to pave the way for legitimate live-work developments. Likewise, the Creative District vision calls for a more diverse mix of uses along the Shipley corridor and potentially other locations including live/work as well as retail sales and entertainment uses. The Creative District Alliance should work with the city to develop a zoning overlay that would allow a broader mix of uses to help cultivate creative production and consumption.

NOW Set forth guidelines for live/work and creative production spaces

Supplemental live/work and creative production design guidelines should be developed as a resource to inform design and construction of projects geared towards artisanal production. These working spaces have special requirements that should be well thought-out and reviewed by design professionals. Design details including loading, fire rating, facilities for storage of hazardous waste materials, ventilation, provision of deep basin sinks, sound proofing, and so on are important to consider both for ensuring the utility and safety of these spaces as well as mitigating effects on nearby neighbors.



[Proposed creative district overlay.]

CULTIVATE COMMUNITY

NOW Develop a targeted marketing strategy

A comprehensive and targeted marketing strategy is needed to attract a number of distinct groups that will each play critical roles on realizing the Creative District. Hire a consultant to develop a marketing plan designed to promote the district in step with its development, including both print and web marketing tools tailored to the specific needs and interests of these groups:

- > Business owners looking to relocate or entrepreneurs seeking new opportunities
- > Developers who may be open to investing
- > Attracting artists to live, work, and/or show their work
- > Marketing to visitors and customers

NOW Hold a district logo design competition

Engage local talent in developing a graphic identity and branding package for the creative district by hosting a logo design competition. Install the logo design entries in a public venue in or near the creative district along with display boards promoting both the district vision and awareness of the concentration of assets it builds on. Post the entries on the web and consider making it an interactive site—allowing users to weigh in with comments and vote for their favorites. This will act to further promote sharing through social media and increase overall awareness of the creative district concept.

PRIORITY Encourage organizations and businesses to hire local artists

Local community-based nonprofits, arts and cultural organizations, and businesses often need graphic design and print/web production services to create promotional and communication materials, storefront displays, and so on. Encouraging organizations and businesses to keep it local by hiring from within the Creative District to provide graphic design and production services would be an easy way to help the local creative community develop. One way to facilitate this is to produce an annual business directory of local creative professionals providing basic information about the services they provide along with contact information.

PRIORITY Formalize an artist and creative business recruitment strategy

In addition to targeted marketing, Creative District leadership should implement policy and financial incentives that make the district more attractive as a place to live and work for creative professionals. Paducah, Kentucky's LowerTown Arts District sets forth a successful model for building a community of local artists through a number of recruitment strategies, including relocation assistance and financing packages tailored to the needs of artists through local banks—both ideas that should be considered for fostering Wilmington's Creative District.

As the Creative District Alliance builds momentum, it is important to start organizing targeted incentives through discussions with City leadership. Learning from other successful cities, a variety of incentives could be considered including:

> **Tax Exemptions:** Some artist recruitment strategies have included exemption from state sales tax for purchase of original works created within a designated arts district. Delaware's lack of sales tax altogether already makes it competitive for incentivizing commerce within the Creative District, but additional policies could be put in place to make income generated from sales of creative works exempt from individual state income taxes for qualifying artists living and working in the Creative District.

> **Property Incentives:** Often times the cost of acquiring or renovating a space can be the barrier that prevents a creative business from settling in a given district. Other cities, including Paducah, Kentucky, offer varying levels of forgivable loans for rehabilitation, fit-out, and façade work as appropriate. The SALT district in Syracuse offers homes for as low as 1 dollar [with the agreement that artists renovate them] as well as rehabilitated structures below market rates.

> **Marketing Assistance:** Helping new creative businesses to thrive is in everyone's best interest. Marketing assistance in the form of matching dollars for advertising, web design, and signage can help to entice new businesses looking to create a brand and customer base.

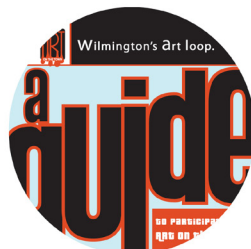
NOW Create more activity after business hours and on weekends

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 40,000 commuters head to their homes outside the city from their jobs in Wilmington every weekday, often facing the daunting task of jockeying for position even before they leave the parking garage. This cohort, which has significant spending power, is in some ways a captive market for arts and entertainment spending in the Creative District for a couple of hours after close of the workday—which would also make for an easier commute once the peak rush hour traffic has died down. However, the majority of the area’s businesses—retail, galleries, and restaurants—close at 5pm. Visitors to the entertainment venues in the area or the monthly Art Loop are faced with the same problem—there aren’t many opportunities to grab a bite before the show or socialize afterwards—regardless of whether they’re visiting on a weeknight or weekend. District leadership should work with local businesses to expand their hours to stay open later on weeknights as well as hold weekend hours. This has the potential to not only increase local spending, but also improve the experience of the District, make it feel safer and livelier.

In addition to working with local businesses to reconsider their permanent hours, the Creative District Alliance could consider organizing other temporary evening events such as night markets, coupon incentives for use at any business in the area on a specific evening, and organizing food truck corrals on the street adjacent to entertainment venues on evenings that are expected to bring in higher numbers of visitors, and so on. Eligibility requirements for business and development incentives should also include extended evening and weekend.



organize events featuring local talent



make the district “ground zero” during art loop



encourage businesses to stay open later during events

NOW Turn up the volume on Art Loop

Now in its 25th year, Wilmington’s Art Loop “Art on the Town” has great potential to bring buzz to the Creative District. Leveraging the positive impact that this event already has on Market Street and the downtown, the Creative District Alliance should identify ways to extend the reach of the event by coordinating programming and activities in the District on Art Loop nights and by expanding marketing of the event by co-promoting Art on the Town and Creative District events.

Building on the idea of working with business owners to create a more active nightlife in the downtown, and specifically during Art on the Town and similar events, the Creative District Alliance should work with the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs and its partners to consider other ways of improving Art on the Town, such as bringing in music and dance performance or other interactive elements. Diversifying the primarily visual art event can expand audiences by attracting visitors who are interested in different forms of art. Coordinating something like this as a “closing event” for Art Loop evenings—especially if held within the District as the “homebase” for Art Loop—would help make the multi-site concept feel more cohesive.

Additionally, Wilmington’s Art Loop, which is held on the same day as Philadelphia’s monthly First Friday, may place it in competition for visitors. In conversations with local decision-makers, artists, and those involved in the business/arts/culture world in Wilmington as a part of this process, several speculated that not only does Wilmington’s Art Loop lose locals to Philadelphia’s First Friday, but that perhaps Wilmington could draw more attendees for Art Loop from the Philadelphia area if Art Loop were not held on the same day as First Friday. Additional research and analysis should be done to understand the potential benefit a change in scheduling could have on both Art on the Town and the Creative District.

PLACEMAKING

PRIORITY Expand programming to integrate creativity into social services

Many residents in and around the Creative District face serious challenges ranging from drugs, crime, poverty, poor housing conditions, youth delinquency, unemployment, and lack of access to quality health care, to name a few. Building a community around the arts and creative production has the potential to offer new and expanded programming to help address some of these long-standing concerns. In many ways, the success of this Creative District depends on the overall health of communities nearby and should continue to focus on arts programs and initiatives that involve and empower community residents. District leadership should secure resources and create partnerships to establish or reinforce programming engaging underserved communities through Social Practice—especially at-risk youth and individuals with physical or emotional challenges.

The concentration of social services along Washington face a perception issue in that there is a lack of awareness of the positive impacts they have on communities and residents in need. Partnering with these social service providers to bring more arts-related programming into the area as well as to reframe the image of both these service providers and the individuals they work with, District Leadership can work to form a “village” founded on the values of Social Practice.

NOW Make use of blank walls to create an outdoor gallery throughout the District

The blank side walls found throughout the area present an opportunity to create a District-wide canvas to showcase local talent, help visually distinguish the Creative District, and, in some locations, promote the District’s branding. A mural program is also an excellent way to integrate youth engagement and job skills training into District activities.



[Top: The Creative Visions Factory crew working on their first mural project on the 7th Street Peninsula. Bottom: A highly visible Shipley sidewall between 5th and 6th would make an ideal location for a high-impact mural.]

[Mural opportunities along Shipley Street]

Implement streetscape enhancements along Shipley

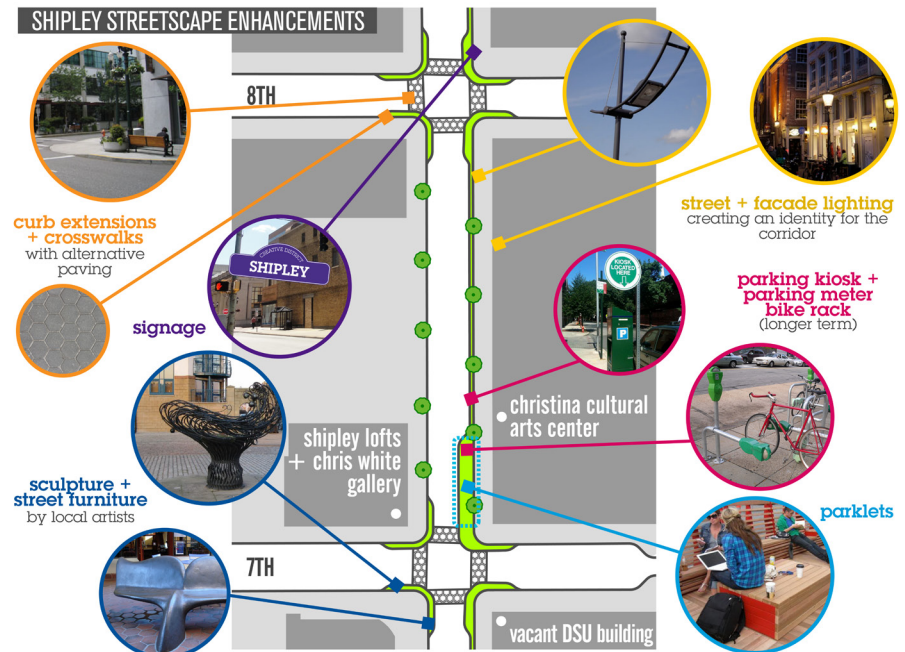
A major component of the framework for the Creative District vision is to concentrate foot traffic, programming, and activity on Shipley Street. The concept originates not only from the strategy of capitalizing on the momentum of Market Street nearby, but also from the opportunity of working with the already distinct character of Shipley Street. Compared to the feel of other streets in the proposed Creative District, Shipley has the best bones to become a creative corridor—the backbone of the District.

The challenge is two-fold: turn public perception of Shipley as a forgotten “back alley” upside-down by reinventing it as a gritty but welcoming destination, and retrofit rear spaces of buildings facing Market to have active ground floor uses fronting on the Shipley Street corridor. Establishing a strong sense of place by building on Shipley’s existing character and infusing some new elements that speak to an emerging culture of creativity is one way to pave the way for private investment in repurposing spaces with frontage on Shipley.

Some part of this equation is not new. Since 2004, the City has identified a streetscape overhaul of Shipley among its priority projects. The Delaware Department of Transportation’s 2010 conceptual designs for Shipley between 4th and 7th Streets propose extending the sidewalk on the east side of the street by two feet into the excessively wide roadway, adding street trees and pedestrian scale lighting on both sides, and providing ADA accessible curb ramps. Creative District leadership is encouraged to advocate for the advancement of this project, but with the following alterations tailored to the concept of making Shipley an arts and cultural destination.

> Extend the improvement area to 9th Street

The DDOT designs propose improvements on Shipley between 4th and 7th Streets only, but the gap from 7th to 9th is a critical connector to the 9th Street corridor and the potential large development at the former Midtown Parking Garage site at 9th and Shipley/Orange.



[Proposed Shipley streetscape elements and public realm improvements.]



[Left: Etched sidewalks in San Francisco's Mission District distinguish the streetscape. Right: Etched sidewalks in Normand Park, London]

> Build bumpouts

Even with the planned two-foot extension of the east side of the sidewalk, Shipley's sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate many streetscape elements such as bike racks and benches. Bumpouts would also provide extra space for public sculpture at cross-streets, which would make the creative corridor more visible to foot traffic on Market.

> Explore decorative sidewalk and crosswalk treatments

DDOT's plans for streetscape enhancements on Shipley specify a standard concrete sidewalk. To make the street stand out as a distinctive corridor, alternative pavement options can go a long way—especially if the aesthetic distinguishes Shipley from the character of the Market Street aesthetic, which employs traditional red brick walkways to complement the main street identity. Other alternative paver strips, etched sidewalks, permeable pavers, rain-activated patterns, and a variety of other options should be considered. Using the same or similar materials and patterns to extend into the crosswalks can act as a signifier that the crosswalk is an extension of the sidewalk, increasing motorists' awareness of the presence of pedestrians.

> Improve bike & car parking

Bumpouts will create additional sidewalk space for bike parking. A longer-term plan would be to install parking kiosks to replace car parking meters, and in turn repurpose the parking meter poles as bike parking, as has been done in several cities. This approach would improve the experience for those visiting on either two or four wheels and also reduce clutter in the sidewalk utility zone.

> Explore the opportunity to bury utility lines

As the cost of burying utility lines is drastically reduced if this can be coordinated with planned streetscape construction, the Shipley Street improvement project would be a great opportunity to consider cleaning up the wires running overhead.



[Proposed Shipley bumpouts make space for bringing the district's identity to the street.]

> Light up the corridor

A priority should be placed on installing pedestrian scale street lights on Shipley streets and on cross streets connecting Shipley to Market as well. Lighting will not only help distinguish the corridor, it will also help improve perception of safety. A variety of lighting fixture styles is found in the downtown Wilmington area, from the traditional lantern-style luminaires on Market Street to the more modern rectangular post lights on 9th Street. The style of pedestrian lighting will figure prominently in the streetscape and identity of the Shipley Street corridor, and District leadership is encouraged to consider lighting aesthetic that harmonizes with the grittier “back-alley” vibe of Shipley with perhaps a more “industrial” look.

> Customize street signs

Swapping out standard street signs for signs that are designed to speak more to the corridor's character would be a subtle but effective way to brand Shipley and make it stand out.

NOW Pursue short term solutions to improve lighting

New pedestrian streetlights are costly streetscape elements that require extensive coordination with the City and utilities. Installing pedestrian scale lighting along Shipley [9th Street and Market Street already have pedestrian scale lighting installed] should indeed be a long-term goal integral to the Delaware Department of Transportation's proposed Shipley Street improvements [including this study's proposed extension of those improvements to 9th Street], but in the meantime, local partners should evaluate more immediate solutions. Façade, awning, or storefront lights offer a lower-cost solution. Business associations could spearhead a larger-scale storefront lighting program, negotiating a bulk purchase and installation rate from selected vendors.

Additionally, as the Creative District Alliance continues to work with business owners on storefront improvements, lighting should be prioritized. Part of this work could include establishing a façade or sign lighting reimbursement or cost sharing program to assist business or commercial property owners with installation and the increased utility costs of keeping the lights on all night.



[From top, left to right: Umbrella street light installation; Bruco Munro installation at Longwood Gardens; Janet Echelman installation in Phoenix; Japan Winter Light Festival; Amsterdam Light Festival; Lyon Festival of Lights]

NOW Temporarily repurpose vacant land to promote District vitality

Vacant and underutilized land in the Creative District study area is seen as an opportunity for future development that would either help establish or harmonize with the District's identity. In the meantime, targeted sites should be considered for interim programming that would bring more activity to the area, turning eyesores into assets to the District. From pop-up beer gardens to mini golf courses to food truck corrals to public sculpture gardens—or any combination thereof—there are any number of temporary uses that could help bring the Creative District vibe into the public realm. Following the model of the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion in London [only on a much smaller scale], the vacant lots could become the grounds of an annual installation featuring temporary public programming structures designed by architects.

The large vacant lot on the 400 block of Shipley/Market is large enough to accommodate a range of ideas that could help establish the lot as a connector between Shipley and Market Streets. Creatively repurposing the lots on the corner of 7th and Tatnall Streets could help build momentum along with the planned development of live/work housing units on 7th and West.



[The vacant lot on the 400 block of Shipley/Market is large enough to accommodate interim uses and also is adjacent to lots on the east side of Market Street and west side of Shipley Street.]

MAKE SPACE for CREATIVITY

NOW Feature work of local talent through outdoor projections and installations

Digital media, including film and photography, can be used to activate underutilized spaces, as any relatively flat surface can serve as a projection canvas for these media. Furthermore, these media would create nighttime programming within the District, helping to combat perception issues within the area, particularly at night. Promoting screenings as events and bringing a food truck corral into the equation would round out the experience for an evening of all-ages fun.

Sidewalls, or large blank walls on the sides of buildings, present numerous opportunities throughout the district to feature local digital multimedia work—or just good old fashioned neighborhood movie nights. Many of the best projection surfaces are located on the numbered streets that run either east or west, as most buildings in the District front streets that run north or south. Artwork on these sidewalls will also serve to activate numbered streets that have limited or no building frontage.

NOW Advocate for preservation and reuse of historic buildings

For a number of reasons, many arts districts across the country have taken root in historic structures, whether through adaptive reuse of formerly industrial buildings to create loft studio spaces or quaint main streets lined with galleries and craft shops. For one, historic architecture lends great value to that certain “sense of place” that is more difficult to achieve through new construction. Additionally, reuse of existing structures tends to result in rents that are more affordable to creative users.

The proposed District overlaps three distinct historic preservation districts, each with its own character and identity, and each with opportunities for adaptive reuse to house activities integral to the Creative District vision. Luckily, many residents of the Quaker Hill neighborhood and owners of properties along Market Street and West 9th Street have put tremendous effort and investment into preserving the historic character of their properties and the collective effect of this

is visible and forms the foundation of the experience of these areas. Unfortunately, so much of the historic fabric of other areas has been lost primarily to demolition and paving the way for surface parking lots that dominate the middle of the proposed District. The Creative District Alliance should work with property owners and local preservation agencies to set a proactive course of action for preserving and reusing historic buildings in the District.

Programs to educate property owners about historic preservation methods and resources are necessary. Organize workshops for property owners providing guidance on both short-term and long-term architectural conservation methods for threatened buildings, as well as advising on available city, state and national historic preservation policy and incentive programs and where and when they may be applicable within the Creative District.

Towards the end of highlighting the potential of vacant or underutilized structures, creative temporary programming and events can generate activity and buzz, help remove the stigma of vacancy, and increase awareness of the neighborhood’s assets. This programming can invite the public to engage with the exterior of buildings or offer the chance for a unique opportunity to explore these structures from within. At the same time, reanimating the District’s forgotten structures can simultaneously serve as both a marketing tool, awakening the imaginations of potential investors, and as an advocacy tool, bringing attention to the value of preserving architectural diversity and existing character.

PRIORITY Pursue scattered site infill and rehabilitation for affordable live/work units in Quaker Hill

West Street is a notable north-south corridor within the Quaker Hill Historic District, both a city and national register historic district. This area possesses a diversity of historic housing stock, including traditional brick row homes and detached houses.

While substantial rehabilitation and preservation efforts have taken place in this area through organizations including Interfaith Community Housing and the Quaker Hill Neighborhood Association, there is still a need for additional rehabilitation to fully stabilize this neighborhood. Properties identified for scattered site rehabilitation and adaptive reuse for live/work housing development are assumed to be fully vacant and are clustered along the West Street corridor within the Quaker Hill Historic District. Almost all of these structures are in average or distressed condition [C or D respectively].

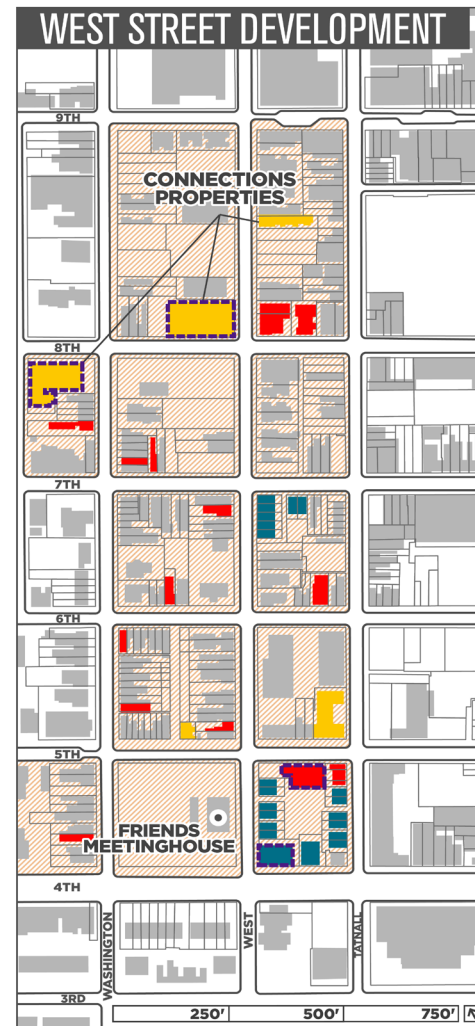
The scattered-site rehabilitation opportunities include three-story attached or semi-detached townhouses and several detached houses as well. These structures could function as either single-family homes or multi-family apartments, either as rental properties or fee-simple sales, for artists and makers in the market for live/work configurations. Similar initiatives to provide affordable live/work opportunities have offered sliding scale rents based on income.

Properties within the historic district may be eligible for city tax abatement. A 10-year abatement program for renovations of properties within any historic district in the city is accompanied by a 5-year abatement for new infill development in a historic district. A 10-year abatement also exists for registered vacant properties [85% for rental properties and 100% for owner-occupied homes on the increased value of the rehabilitation improvements]. Properties may also be eligible for Delaware's Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program or Federal and tax credits, although the latter are limited and extremely competitive. A partnership with a local bank is another option for financing rehabilitations in and around West Street, similar to the Paducah's LowerTown Arts District model.

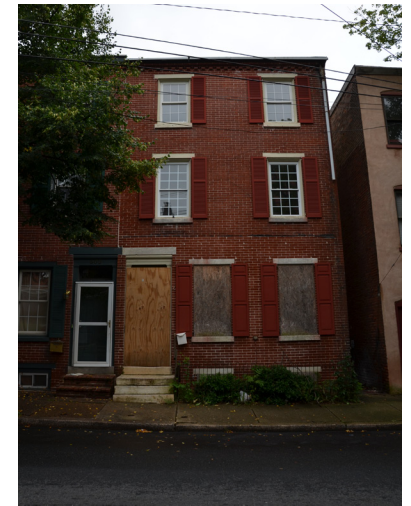


[Scattered opportunities exist in and around West Street for the rehabilitation of housing into artist live/work spaces.]

Some limited opportunities for new infill construction of live/work development also exist along the West Street corridor. The proposed live/work development by Interfaith Community Housing at 7th and West could be a critical catalytic project leveraging additional investment in the area. This plan also proposes infill development on the block bounded by West, Tatnall, 5th, and 4th to allow a greater diversity of live-work housing typologies, as well as to accommodate shared creative production facilities in a prospective adaptive reuse of the historic gymnasium on the north side of the block. This building could be rehabilitated to include over 10,000 square feet of multifamily housing and at least 5,100 square feet of creative production space. Adjacent to the historic gymnasium and across the street are two additional buildings that are also potential opportunities for rehabilitated creative production spaces, totaling approximately 8,000 square feet. In addition to these rehabilitation projects, this plan proposes new construction in the infill development: twelve single family townhomes comprising approximately 31,000 square feet and two live/work multifamily buildings comprising over 24,000 square feet. The zoning of this block is primarily R-3 at present, but allowing this type of development would require rezoning to allow creative production uses as well as building typologies currently not permitted.



- ground floor creative production opportunity
- new construction
- major rehab
- rehab



[Left: Vacant structures in the West Street area present opportunity for development. Those in poor condition would be in need of a major rehabilitation. Presently vacant land could be sites for new construction. Above: Vacant homes along West Street.]



[Conceptual rendering of Shipley Street transformation through public and private investment.]