

RCW 43.46.100 Creative districts—Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Commission" means the Washington state arts commission.

(2) "Coordinator" means the employee of the Washington state arts commission who is responsible for performing the specific tasks under RCW 43.46.115.

(3) "Creative district" means a land area designated by a local government in accordance with RCW 43.46.105 that contains either a hub of cultural facilities, creative industries, or arts-related businesses, or multiple vacant properties in close proximity that would be suitable for redevelopment as a creative district.

(4) "Local government" means a city, county, or town.

(5) "State-certified creative district" means a creative district whose application for certification has been approved by the commission. [2017 c 240 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2017 c 240: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) A creative district is a designated, geographical, mixed-use area of a community in which a high concentration of cultural facilities, creative businesses, or arts-related businesses serve as a collective anchor of public attraction;

(b) In certain cases, multiple vacant properties in close proximity may exist within a community that would be suitable for redevelopment as a creative district;

(c) Creative districts are a highly adaptable economic development tool that is able to take a community's unique conditions, assets, needs, and opportunities into account and thereby address the needs of large, small, rural, and urban areas;

(d) Creative districts may be home to both nonprofit and for-profit creative industries and organizations;

(e) The arts and culture transcend boundaries of race, age, gender, language, and social status; and

(f) Creative districts promote and improve communities in particular and the state more generally in many ways. Specifically, such districts:

(i) Attract artists and creative entrepreneurs to a community and thereby infuse the community with energy and innovation and enhance the economic and civic capital of the community;

(ii) Create a hub of economic activity that helps an area become an appealing place to live, visit, and conduct business, complements adjacent businesses, creates new economic opportunities and jobs in both the cultural sector and other local industries, and attracts new businesses and assists in the recruitment of employees;

(iii) Establish marketable tourism assets that highlight the distinct identity of communities, attract in-state, out-of-state, and international visitors, and become especially attractive destinations for cultural, recreational, and business travelers;

(iv) Revitalize and beautify neighborhoods, cities, and larger regions, reverse urban decay, promote the preservation of historic buildings, and facilitate a healthy mixture of business and residential activity that contributes to reduced vacancy rates and enhanced property values;

(v) Provide a focal point for celebrating and strengthening a community's unique cultural identity, providing communities with opportunities to highlight existing cultural amenities as well as

mechanisms to recruit and establish new artists, creative industries, and organizations;

(vi) Provide artists with a creative area in which they can live and work, with living spaces that enable them to work in artistic fields and find affordable housing close to their place of employment; and

(vii) Enhance property values. Successful creative districts combine improvements to public spaces such as parks, waterfronts, and pedestrian corridors, alongside property development. The redevelopment of abandoned properties and historic sites and recruiting businesses to occupy vacant spaces can also contribute to reduced vacancy rates and enhanced property values.

(2) It is the intent of the legislature that the state provide leadership, technical support, and the infrastructure to local communities desirous of creating their own creative districts by, among other things, certifying districts, offering available incentives to encourage business development, exploring new incentives that are directly related to creative enterprises, facilitating local access to state assistance, enhancing the visibility of creative districts, providing technical assistance and planning help, ensuring broad and equitable program benefits, and fostering a supportive climate for the arts and culture, thereby contributing to the development of healthy communities across the state and improving the quality of life of the state's residents." [2017 c 240 s 1.]