

Objective 3: Neighborhood Revitalization Through the Arts

Engaging all of Kenosha's communities in meaningful creative programming and economic development efforts

Context

There is a lot of focus on developing the downtown area with creative activity, but similar initiatives must take place in all neighborhoods to reinvigorate Kenosha as a whole. There have already been successful arts districts established in the Union Park and Uptown/Lincoln Park neighborhoods that can serve as a model for other neighborhoods. Many partners need to be engaged for this initiative to be successful, including artists and arts organizations, schools, city government, local businesses, libraries, neighborhood associations, and community leaders/neighborhood champions. *Some challenges identified to neighborhood revitalization include: disorganized neighborhood organizations; lack of awareness of current neighborhood assets; possible language barriers in certain communities; lack of community identity in some areas; and transiency of new residents.* In order to achieve the outcomes identified in this strategic plan, key leaders in each neighborhood will need to work with local partners to establish programming and events that are significant and representative of the community.

Key findings that led to this objective

- Neighborhood revitalization was identified as a priority by Kenosha residents during community conversations (Phase III)
- The current leadership of the creative economy was identified as not representative of the entire Kenosha community (Phase I)
- It is important to encourage neighborhood-based programs and events and maintain the unique identities of these neighborhoods (Phase I)
- Downtown cannot be the only focus of investment and revitalization – there are individuals and organizations in every community that need to be included in those efforts (Phase III)

Key Partnerships

- City of Kenosha
- Kenosha Commission for the Arts
- Kenosha Unified School District
- Kenosha Public Library

Exploring Current Neighborhood Arts Initiatives

[Union Park Arts District](#),
Kenosha, WI

[Uptown Arts District](#),
Michigan City, IN

“I think the work downtown is going to have a lot of positive impact on the surrounding neighborhoods”
- Kenosha-area business leader

“...the presence of artists in a neighborhood can be a powerful magnet for urban revitalization.”
- Artspace Preliminary Feasibility Report, 2014

Contact for this objective:

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KEY INITIATIVE I

Establish a network of community leaders and partners to actively drive programming efforts

Outcomes

- Dedicated leaders and ambassadors who have the pulse of the neighborhoods will be able to lead initiatives and help steward new and current opportunities
- Partnerships can be formed once leaders are identified

Action Steps

- Identify key neighborhood and business leaders, beginning with current partners and expanding to include the true influencers and champions within each community
- Look to KUSD, libraries, and parks as partner organizations and creators of community programming

KEY INITIATIVE II

Eliminate barriers to city permitting, licenses, and other processes

Outcomes

- Neighborhoods can easily navigate the complex city requirements for events and other activities
- Increased number of organizations and individuals able to effectively put on local programs and events

Actions

- Identify key partners in city government and local grassroots organizations
- Create toolkits that pull together resources in one place that neighborhood associations can easily access

KEY INITIATIVE III

Activate engagement and networking opportunities between neighborhoods

Outcomes

- Neighborhood leaders are engaged with each other and able to bounce ideas off each other and form potential collaborations
- Kenosha has multiple community advocates working together to establish new artistic and creative efforts in all neighborhoods

Actions

- Conduct workshops to connect neighborhood leaders
- Host community forums to encourage conversations between community leaders, residents, and artists