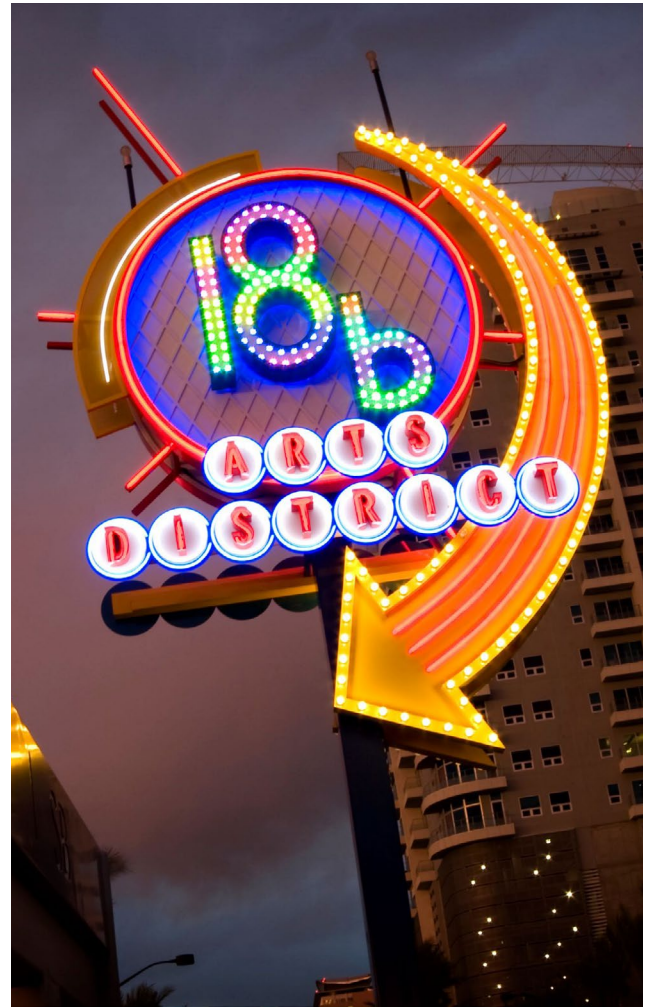


PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY STUDY

Las Vegas, Nevada | April 2024



Cover Photos (From Upper Left): “Welcome to the Arts District” mural by Recycled Propaganda on Main St and Imperial, The Las Vegas 18b Arts District Sign on Main Street, “Queen of the Arts” entry to West Las Vegas Arts Center // Photo Credits: Meow Wolf, Artspace, Ryan Reason of Square Shooting



Prepared at the request of the City of Las Vegas

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Artspace thanks the City of Las Vegas for inviting us into your community. This visit would not have been possible without the leadership and support of the Core Group members, especially Maggie Plaster and Tammy Christensen. The Core Group and focus group participants they assembled offered invaluable insight, hospitality, and feedback throughout the process. It was a pleasure to work with such a committed group. We would also like to thank the 200+ focus group and open house participants who made their voices heard over the course of this study.



LAS VEGAS CORE GROUP

- Arcelia Barajas** // CLV Neighborhood Services Deputy Director
- Ashley Foster** // CLV Administrative Secretary
- Jamie Giellis** // CLV Arts District Consultant
- Kathi Thomas** // Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority
- Lee Quick** // Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority
- Michelle Patrick** // Community Arts Development Specialist, Nevada Arts Council
- Mike Howe** // CLV Planning Project Manager
- Maggie Plaster** // CLV Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Director
- Sallie Doebler** // Mayor's Fund CEO



AMERICA'S LEADER IN ARTIST-LED COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Artspace is a nonprofit organization that uses the tools of real estate development to create affordable, appropriate places where artists can live and work. Because Artspace owns each of the projects it develops, we are able to ensure that they remain affordable and accessible to artists in perpetuity. Over the last four decades, Artspace has led an accelerating national movement of artist-led community transformation. While embracing the value the arts bring to individual lives, Artspace has championed the once-radical idea that artists living on the edge of poverty and chronically underfunded arts organizations can leverage fundamental social change. With headquarters in Minneapolis and offices in New York and Washington D.C., Artspace is America's leading developer of arts facilities with 57 completed projects to date and has provided consulting services to more than 350 communities and arts organizations nationwide.

WWW.ARTSPACE.ORG

FOCUS GROUP ATTENDEES*

INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

- | | |
|--|--|
| Ashlie Randolph // Artist | Judi Moreo // Artist |
| Becky Miller // Artist | Matt & Heidi Morgan // Nevada Shakespeare Festival |
| Brent Holmes // Artist | Pam Stuckey // Artist |
| Carmen Beals // Nevada Museum of Art Las Vegas Representative | Sapira Cheuk // Nevada Arts Council (Las Vegas Office) |
| Denise R Duarte // Artist | Sean Blanchard // Artist |
| Gig Depio // Artist | Stephanie Sumler // Clark County Parks and Recreation - Public Arts |
| Jim White // Artist | Vanessa Maciel // Artist |
| Joan Paye // Art Barn Workshop | Wendy Kveck // UNLV, Artist |

EQUITY IN SPACE - DIVERSE LEADERS

- | | |
|---|---|
| Ashanti McGee // Western States Arts Federation | Julie Navis // Clark County |
| Chase McCurdy // Thirty Three Gallery | Ms. China // Artist |
| Christopher Aguilar // StanD | Torry Russell // Boardway in the Hood |
| Erica Vital-Lazare // College of Southern Nevada | Vogue Robinson // Artist, Left of Center |
| Irma Varela // Winchester Cultural Center | |

CIVIC AND FINANCE LEADERS

- | | |
|---|---|
| Arcelia Barajas // City of Las Vegas | Jorge McLaughlin // Vezun |
| Cass Palmer // City of North Las Vegas | Sabra Newby // Deputy City Manager |
| Chase Underwood // City of North Las Vegas | Sallie Doebler // The Mayor's Fund |
| Heather Harmon // Triple Aught Foundation | Seth Floyd // City of Las Vegas Community Development Director |
| John Tippins // Northcap | |

Public meeting attendees are included in Appendix B.

*Attendees are identified to the best of our abilities. We apologize for any omissions or misspellings.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Artspace was invited to Las Vegas to study the feasibility of creating affordable artist live/work space in or near the burgeoning Las Vegas Arts District (18b). For a city with a national and international reputation built on entertainment and the arts, advancing housing for the creative sector comes as a strategic move.

Years of planning work predated the 2024 visit by Artspace. Centro, led by Jamie Giellis, was instrumental in laying the framework for Artspace’s engagement in the city. The Las Vegas Arts District Survey (302 respondents) and 100+ conversations mentioned affordability and artists being priced out as a paramount problem for the Arts District. It also suggested that the city has the opportunity to intervene now before artists and creative spaces continue to leave and be displaced by quickly changing market forces. Artspace’s work is built upon Centro’s work and specifically, **Strategy #4. Establish Affordable Space for Artists to Live and Work.**

The STRATEGIES| Las Vegas Arts District

STRATEGY #1: Expand the Arts District Boundaries; Formalize Identity	A. Zoning Amendment to Expand the Arts District Boundaries; Establish Unique Tools B. Formalize Arts District Identity and Align Stakeholders C. Restore the Paintbrush Gateway D. 4 TH Street Improvements
STRATEGY #2: Support the Formation of a Business Improvement District	A. Support Stakeholders in a BID Formation Process B. Support Effective Delivery of BID Services C. Support the Evolution of 18b
STRATEGY #3: Create New Spaces to Facilitate Artistic Creation, Education and Training	A. Feasibility Study to Establish Arts Education Facility B. Feasibility Study for Black Box Community Theatre Space C. Tools to Encourage Private Sector Creative Spaces
STRATEGY #4: Establish Affordable Space for Artists to Live and Work	A. Artspace Feasibility Study B. Artspace Market Study C. Artspace Predevelopment
STRATEGY #5: Unite the Arts and Business Communities	A. Formalize Organization to Unite Business and Cultural Leaders in Las Vegas, Regionally B. Support Initiative to Address Policy, Programs, and Philanthropy for Arts/Culture C. Spur Private Sector Investment that Facilitates Arts and Culture

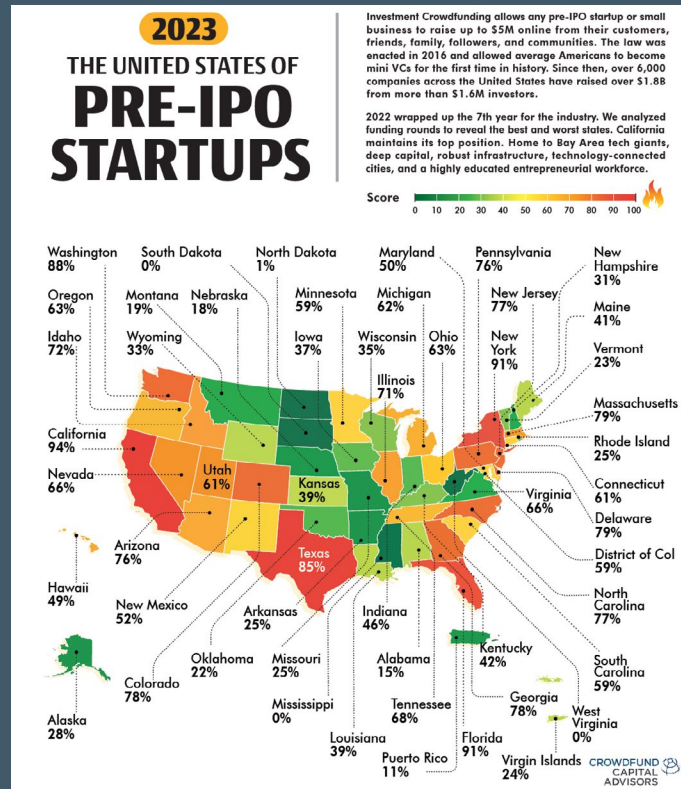
Source: Centro Las Vegas Arts District Report, 2023

In Artspace’s experience, this process cannot only be led by the city. The cross-sector team who helped plan our visit included local artists and funding partners as well. Artspace was represented by Kelley Lindquist, President, Wendy Holmes, Senior Vice President, and Aneesha Marwah, Director.

Prior to our visit, the City of Las Vegas team had a chance to tour the Loveland Artspace Campus in Loveland, Colorado to familiarize themselves with Artspace’s work and model.

Las Vegas Ranked Best City in America for Pre-IPO Startups.

Las Vegas displaces Austin as the best city for startups in 2023 based on data from over 6,000 pre-IPO startups that have raised money online from investors.



LAS VEGAS, NEVADA AT A GLANCE	
Population (2023 est.)	656,503
Households (2023 est.)	249,428
Population % Change 2010-2023	+12%
Est. Population Growth 2023-2028	+3%
Vacant Housing Units (2022)	7.4%
Median Age (2022 est.)	37.6
Median Household Income (2023 est.)	\$62,391
Median Gross Rent (Monthly) (2021)	\$1,423
Renter-Occupied Households (2023 est.)	44%
Race/Ethnicity (Top 5, 2023 est.)	<p>White: 44.4%</p> <p>Hispanic/Latino (of any race): 33.8%</p> <p>Black/African American: 13.3%</p> <p>Asian: 7.8%</p>

Source: Esri Business Analyst, US Census, 2021



"Big Rig Jig" by Mike Ross at Fergusons Downtown // Photo Credit: Meow Wolf

II. PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY STUDY

Preliminary Feasibility Study (PFS) is the first step Artspace takes to determine whether an affordable arts development project can move forward within the context of a community's unique needs, assets, sites, leaders, and resources.

Since the pandemic, Artspace has approached the PFS study in a hybrid form. We kicked off our engagement with a virtual focus group for artists and arts organizations on January 10, 2024. The Artspace Consulting team visited Las Vegas on January 16-18, 2024 to tour potential sites, connect with local stakeholders, and share information about how these projects come together. This initial assessment is to determine if there is interest and the appropriate resources to make a project possible in Las Vegas.

A strong indication of the desire and need for this kind of project in Las Vegas was the number of attendees who participated in multiple meetings facilitated by Artspace Consulting during the course of our study. The excitement was palpable, especially at the in-person event at the Historic Fifth Street School. There was a wide mix of attendees at our meetings in terms of ages, art forms, demographics, and longevity in the city - with many new faces for locals to meet.

The local Core Group was instrumental in planning the tours and inviting the community and public to the various meetings. At every meeting, we had thoughtful conversations with community members about their excitement for a project like this and how the Arts District is facing rapid gentrification and is at a tipping point.

Several members of the Core Group commented on how Artspace was invited into the community at the right time - and how it can be a solution to retain artists in the Arts District.

Artspace also had the opportunity to host a breakout session at the Las Vegas Arts and Culture Summit on February 29, 2024. The results from this session start on page 58.



Source: City of Las Vegas Arts & Culture Summit Flyer, 2024

PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY ENGAGEMENT

During the January Las Vegas visit, the Artspace team:

- Facilitated four focus group meetings:
 - Artists and Arts Organizations (Virtual)
 - Core Group Dinner (In-person at Garagiste)
 - Equity in Space (In-person at The Center)
 - Funders/Civic Leaders (In-person at The Center)
- Met the 18b Leadership at Recycled Propaganda.
- Community Tour of the Arts District, Commercial Center, Symphony Park, NuWu, East Fremont Street.
- Toured potential sites in and near the Arts District (additional site tours on Feb. 28th when in town to present at the 2nd Annual Arts & Culture Summit).
- Presented at a Public Meeting at the Historic Fifth Street School.
- Wrap-up breakfast with the Core Group.
- Press Interviews for the [Las Vegas Sun](#), [Fox5Vegas](#), and [Casino](#).
- Toured parts of West Las Vegas and North Las Vegas, including Left of Center (LOC) and live/work units of housing (8 units of rental apartments with ground floor makers space and 2nd floor living space at 2207 West Gowan Road in North Las Vegas).



Las Vegas Core Group // Photo Credit: Artspace

The Artspace Approach

Based on three decades of experience, Artspace has identified six key components of community-led development that every community needs to have in place to make an Artspace development feasible. For the Preliminary Feasibility Study, Artspace organizes information through the lens of these **six components**, defined below:

ALIGNMENT WITH BROADER COMMUNITY GOALS. A potential project can help achieve other civic goals, such as supporting nonprofits or historic preservation. Artspace considers strategies and partnerships that can leverage impact so that a future project can be greater than the sum of its parts.

PROJECT CONCEPT. What type(s) of space would the creative community like to see created? Although many communities have a well-developed project concept in mind before embarking on this study, Artspace's first step is to ask residents, "What type of creative spaces are needed and wanted in your community?"

CREATIVE SECTOR. Is there a sufficiently strong creative sector to support an arts facility? Artspace seeks to better understand the existing arts community, its assets, challenges, opportunities, and whether there is cohesion and the ability to advocate for this type of project.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP. Are there leaders on the ground in Las Vegas who are willing and able to advocate for the project, open doors, and keep lines of communication flowing between a developer and the community? These leaders come to the project from all industries, from elected officials who control agencies and program dollars to citizens who are passionate about making their community a better place to live, work, and create.

FUNDING AND FINANCING. Arts facilities typically represent significant investments of civic resources. Although a variety of state and federal programs can be used to generate revenue for construction, Artspace relies on local funding and financing programs to support pre-development expenses and gap funding. The Preliminary Feasibility Study considers the community's interest and capacity to commit resources to an arts facility. Basic information is gathered about local funding options from both private and public institutions, as well as philanthropic donations.

POTENTIAL SITES. At this stage, the primary goal is not to select the final site but rather to identify candidates for further study. The factors under consideration include location, size, ease of acquisition, and potential for sustained positive impact. As a project moves into predevelopment, these (and perhaps other) candidate sites will be evaluated in the context of a refined Project Concept.



Initial Reflections From The Visit

Artspace Consulting learned about the history and context of the dynamics at play in the Arts District from our Core Group. There is excitement around this locale, away from The Strip and Fremont Street, and the city has already invested a great deal of resources in this rapidly changing area. According to 18b, foot traffic in the Arts District is 17,000 per day; 10 years ago, that number was 400, a huge increase by any standard. There is a clear desire for the Arts District to be for Las Vegas residents and not another tourist attraction. But the Arts District is quickly losing the Arts and Artists that once worked and resided there.

Las Vegas is also a young city; any vestige of historic buildings have mostly been torn down to build newer, seemingly less permanent space. The Arts District is a special space that has created a district from one to two-story autobody and other former industrial spaces. The murals that adorn this district are top-notch and make it a destination in itself. The City wants to get out of the habit and reputation of the constant cycle of demolishing and rebuilding. The Arts District is referenced many times in the City of Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan as an example of a successful walkable urbanist neighborhood in the midst of what is otherwise a sprawling city.

Funding and perception-wise, there is the notion that the Las Vegas city government has very deep coffers. However, much of Southern Nevada's tax revenue is derived from the Strip, since Paradise, Nevada, is its own unincorporated part of Clark County. Even by locals, this nuance is not fully understood.

Defining A Project Concept In Las Vegas

Based on the information gathered during this study and two visits, Artspace **recommends the exploration of a downtown mixed-use, live/work artist housing development as the priority project concept for Las Vegas.** A development with affordable live/work housing for artists on its upper floors and commercial space on the ground floor would be appropriate to pursue in or within walking distance of the Arts District. A new construction project would be most suitable for this area. Arts and community advocates should also use these findings as an advocacy tool to prioritize other spaces in the community for the creative sector and continue dialogue with civic leaders.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY IN CREATIVE SPACE

Artspace, we are committed to using our platform as consultants and nonprofit developers to elevate the voices of those who, all too often, are not included in real estate decisions. Every community has room to improve in addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) issues, and Las Vegas is no exception. In each of the findings of this report, we identify areas where DEIA opportunities exist for the community. Creative space is not developed in a vacuum, and communities like Las Vegas have historical imbalances of power that need to be further evaluated for all parties to truly feel welcome in any future community-driven space.

One method we use to identify DEIA challenges is inviting artists and cultural leaders who identify as BIPOC – black, indigenous, or a person of color – to share their challenges and issues around creative space to an Equity in Space discussion to offer their perspectives. Reflections from those conversations are included throughout the report, most notably in the section devoted to alignment with broader community goals, especially since supporting a diverse cultural community was a top goal.



Photos (From Left): Arts & Culture Summit Session on Creative Space Needs, Public Meeting During the Feasibility Study. // Photo Credit: Artspace

Bringing Artspace's National Experience to Las Vegas

In addition to the information gathered about Las Vegas, this report is informed by Artspace's experience working in other cities that have invested in affordable facilities for artists and arts organizations. The following thoughts provide context for evaluating the feasibility and demonstrating the importance of creative spaces:

Mixed-use arts facilities with long-term affordability have been shown to:

GENERATE ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT. Each development provides indirect, direct, and induced economic impact, as well as job opportunities before, during, and after construction.

PRESERVE OLD BUILDINGS, STABILIZE NEIGHBORHOODS, AND REVITALIZE VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES. They help create activity and foot traffic in areas devoid of creativity.

CATALYZE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT, such as façade improvements and general beautification in the surrounding area.

CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES that give the public opportunities to interact with the artist tenants through gallery events, demonstrations, performances, and installations. They also provide opportunities for other local artists to showcase their work.

SUPPORT INDEPENDENT ARTISTS who are each, in effect, cottage industry business owners, generating economic activity by selling products or services, purchasing equipment and supplies, and paying taxes.

BUILD COMMUNITY. Artists and creatives are active neighbors and community members. Many collaborate with the educational, cultural, and business communities as teachers, community conveners, and volunteers. The spaces provide a place where cultural art forms can be passed from one generation to the next.

CORE GOALS

At the heart of every Artspace development are these goals:

- Meet the creative sector's space needs
- Ensure long-term affordability
- Reflect the unique culture and character of the community
- Include diverse BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and other underrepresented voices at the table
- Exemplify sustainable and efficient design
- Operate in the black
- Hire a local property management firm trained in affordable housing management to maintain, support, and manage the rental facility



Riverside Artist Lofts in Reno, Nevada // Photo Credit: Artspace



Las Vegas Art Square is an artistic & cultural hub of the Las Vegas Arts District. Located at 1025 S. 1st St. // Photo Credit: DTLV Arts

III. FINDINGS

Alignment with Broader Community Goals

Successful arts buildings serve not only their residents and other tenants but also the surrounding community. They accomplish this by aligning with as many complementary goals as possible, effectively becoming more than the sum of their parts. When multiple goals can be addressed, it helps bring more stakeholders to the table who are eager to see the project succeed.

To help us determine the goals that matter most, we asked focus groups and public meeting attendees to choose their top three goals from the list in the table below. The top choices are shaded below.

ALIGNMENT WITH BROADER GOALS RESULTS					
Community Goal	Artists/ Arts Orgs (Virtual)	Civic and Finance (In-Person)	Equity in Space (In-Person)	Open House (In-Person)	Total
Preserving Affordability	15	11	12	29	67
Activating Vacant Lots	6	9	7	22	44
Sustaining Creative Businesses and Nonprofits	7	0	3	24	34
Supporting a Diverse Cultural Community	7	4	8	12	31
Historic Preservation	4	2	7	11	24
Strengthening Community and Intergenerational Ties	5	5	7	7	24
Increasing Residential Density	2	3	3	8	24
Retaining Recent Graduates	2	1	2	8	13
Anchoring an Arts District	0	1	0	12	13
Promoting Tourism	0	0	0	7	7
Downtown Revitalization	2	0	0	4	6
Developing a City/County Identity	1	0	1	3	5

In Las Vegas, the top goals were:

- 1. Preserving Affordability.** Long-term affordability was identified as the top goal and is a core value of every Artspace project. Las Vegas has historically been relatively affordable and still has a gritty edge to it. That has rapidly changed since Covid with escalating costs in general, as well as for real estate and housing in particular. These same factors are intensely playing out in the Arts District. Median gross rent for a 1-bedroom unit is nearing \$1,500 in the city limits, per the 2022 U.S. Census and American Community Survey estimates, making housing costs unaffordable for many in the creative industries.

The city was ranked #4 fastest growing by a recent [Bloomberg study](#) and one of the fastest growing in the West. The population has always been relatively transient, and the city lacks the philanthropic roots of older cities. Someone described it as a city that attracts “vultures” who want to capitalize on the money, gambling, and historic lawlessness in the city.

This perception has led to a lack of cohesion, zoning, and planning and also a lack of a centralized arts advocacy voice entity beyond the City’s Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department.

On our community tour, Artspace met 18b board member Priscilla Fowler, owner of Priscilla Fowler Fine Art Gallery on S. Main Street. She mentioned how much her rent had increased in recent years, which will likely cause her to close her space this June. Over the past seven years, four galleries in the Arts District have had to close due to rent increases, and Priscilla Fowler Fine Art Gallery is one of the only ones remaining. A number of the places Artspace toured mentioned affordability challenges of existing in Las Vegas, from the closures of spaces at New Orleans Square to the rent increases in the Arts District. Many of these rent increases are caused by increased tax and insurance rates that owners need to pass along to their tenants. The move toward forming a Business Improvement District (BID) in the Arts District could go a long way toward creating policies and systems that will enable more affordable rents for creative businesses and artists.

- 2. Activating Vacant Lots.** Artspace was surprised by the number of vacant lots downtown and in the Arts District. While most are privately owned, once developed, the whole area will have a significantly different feel in the years to come. The City’s Vision 2045 Downtown Las Vegas Master Plan presents a guide for some of that future development, including a focus on the 18b Arts District and on Catalytic Projects.

TABLE 3.2: KEY INVESTMENTS MATRIX

STREAMLINED GOVERNANCE	CATALYTIC PROJECTS	CREATIVE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES	INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT	PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
Adopt form-based coding	Purchase of key parcels	Focus incentives on transit hubs	Expand transit network, including Light Rail system & Downtown Circulator	Attract target institutions & niche industries	Advance downtown-wide priorities / support efforts of individual districts
Offer zoning incentives (density bonus, etc.)	Utilize land banking / leverage properties under public ownership	Offer suite of local incentives (property tax incentives, micro-loans, off-site improvements, etc.)	Build green streets	Realize catalytic projects	Undertake measures to improve safety & security
Employ fast-track permitting / administrative review procedures (60-day average)	Use for priority redevelopment site and catalytic projects	Establish economic development capital fund	Introduce comprehensive wayfinding system	Promote workforce education & training	Help fund Downtown Circulator
Downtown planning department (3-4 new employees)				Support incubator and accelerator programs	Oversee management of Downtown Parking
					Coordinate branding and marketing, and events programming

Source: Key Investments Matrix from 2045 Master Plan re: Catalytic Projects, highlighting the City’s investment in key parcels.

The Commercial Center/New Orleans Square area was also prime for redevelopment and activation. Clark County owns the large lot which would make for a great reuse.

Guiding new developments to include affordable housing or below-market commercial space for creative businesses would be one way that activating vacant lots could dovetail with the first goal, preserving affordability.

3. Sustaining Creative Businesses and Arts Nonprofits. An affordable, self-sustaining, mixed-use art facility helps to ensure a long-term home for creative businesses and nonprofits, as well as individual artists. A critical mass of creatives also offers increased visibility to the buying public and an opportunity for artists to share networks, materials, and ideas. In our experience, having an Artspace building can help organizations partner, network and, strengthen their capacity.

The fledgling support for the creative sector was a hot-button issue for Vegas artists. It was apparent that arts nonprofits and artists are leaving the Arts District. There is a growing fear there will not be any artists left in the Arts District, and instead, it will become a “brewery row” for tourists.

Putting solutions in place now to support the businesses and entrepreneurs there is very important, especially given the tipping point the Arts District in Vegas is facing. The strategies Centro has set forth include addressing some of these concerns.

Arts leaders mentioned that there are many unincorporated arts businesses. Having an organization/ foundation that can act as a fiscal sponsor for organizations can be one solution to growing capacity with small arts and cultural nonprofits for them to eventually take on leases.

The results from the February 29th Arts and Culture Summit Breakout Session on page 58 further underscore the need for space and support.

EXCERPT FROM CITY OF LAS VEGAS 2050 MASTER PLAN

Growing the City's local talent and businesses should include **support and resources for entrepreneurs and small businesses**. Research consistently shows the critical role that small businesses and entrepreneurs play in local economies by creating jobs and their resiliency during economic downturns. In Nevada, small businesses employed 42% of the private workforce, and firms with fewer than 100 employees had the largest share of small business employment. In addition, the number of proprietors increased in Nevada by 2.5% year-over-year. A 2018 analysis by Business.org listed Las Vegas as one of the “top 40 start-up cities” factoring criteria like young adult residents, educational attainment of young adults, employment rates, affordability, and start-up surges. The City must invest and market its local talent and small business community to encourage long-term sustainable economic growth. It must also partner with each Chamber of Commerce and their respective initiatives to foster small business growth, diversity, and equity goals. The City can support small business development and entrepreneurs directly by **offering targeted incentive and financing programs**, offering places for new start-ups or live-work areas, such as the Las Vegas Arts District within Downtown Las Vegas, and **work on reasonable business-friendly licensing efforts** that help ease up-front start-up costs.

Source: City of Las Vegas Master Plan, 2050, Chapter 3, Page 163.
<https://files.lasvegasnevada.gov/planning/CLV-2050-Master-Plan.pdf>

4. Supporting a Diverse Cultural Community. City leaders were surprised and concerned to learn that people of color do not currently feel welcome in the Arts District. The businesses and type of interactions people mentioned show that there is much room for improvement and inclusivity. The leadership feels very white, and there is a need for more incubator spaces and mentors that promote diversity. Artspace hopes this is the beginning of opportunities to gather more diverse artists to continue the conversation and be a part of the leadership that forms solutions to this complex topic.

The Equity in Space Focus Group participants mentioned the need for more resources for non-white communities, especially a Latinx Cultural Center, given that nearly 1/3 of the population identifies as Hispanic. NuWu is a hallmark example of a Native American-run space, and its success also shows the need for more support for native artists.

The Equity in Space conversation brought up that Las Vegas is very diverse, yet artists feel boxed in; some spaces are exclusive, and accessibility is an issue. The City acknowledges the need for more diversity on the City's Planning Commission, Arts Commission, 18b, and other local boards.

Given the history and roots in the African-American community, Artspace also toured the Historic Westside on our second visit where we learned about a new workforce training center, library, affordable multi-family housing, a farmer's market and more.

ARAB-AMERICAN MUSEUM AND BLACK LIVES MATTER 360 EXHIBITION PARTNERSHIP

CITY HALL ARTSPACE LOFTS // DEARBORN, MI

City Hall Artspace Lofts in Dearborn, Michigan is a great example of how an Artspace project can foster relationships between artists in and out of the building. During the development process as early as 2010, the Arab-American Museum, which is located directly across the street from the property, was an early partner. City Hall Artspace Lofts now houses an artist in residency unit for visiting artists who are exhibiting at the museum, and have welcomed artists from Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and beyond. Artspace Consulting also coached the Arab American Museum through our Immersion program on their expansion and incubator space.

The artists in the building, led by original resident Julia Denguhlanga, also have transformed the ground floor into a community gallery space. The Black Lives Matter 360 Exhibition that went up in response to the death of George Floyd showcases work from artists within the building, and from other mission-driven community organizations.



Photo Credit: Artspace

INVESTING IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Taking a measure of creative placemaking

The Artspace live/work model has been proven to benefit communities by:

- Animating deteriorated historic structures and/or underutilized spaces.
- Bringing vacant and/or underutilized spaces back on the tax rolls and boosting area property values.
- Fostering the safety and livability of neighborhoods without evidence of gentrification-led displacement.
- Anchoring arts districts and expanding public access to the art.
- Attracting additional artists, arts businesses, organizations, and supporting non-arts businesses to the area.
- [Take a Measure of Creative Placemaking](#)

Project Concept

Some communities are clear about what they hope to achieve; others are starting from scratch. They look to Artspace to guide them through the process of determining whether a new facility makes sense for them – and, if so, what kind of space. While the space needs of creatives in each community are different, Artspace has learned from more than 40 years of conversations with artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses and entrepreneurs that there are commonalities across the types of spaces that are needed to live, create, and present creative work. Although affordable live/work space for artists is central to most Artspace projects, residential projects are not necessarily the right fit for every community. From our very first conversation with Las Vegas artists, it was evident that housing was central to the vision.

Priority Concepts

The first question Artspace asks in any new city is, “What kind of creative spaces are needed in your community?”

What the Las Vegas artist and arts organizations said...

What types of artist spaces are most needed in Las Vegas? Rank these in order of importance.



Artist/Art Organization Focus Group Space Rankings

What the Las Vegas public said...



Las Vegas Public Meeting Space Rankings

The artists/arts organization focus group and public meeting attendees were asked to prioritize the type of artists/creative space they would like to see in Las Vegas. The top response was for affordable artist live/work housing. Other desired spaces included public engagement/community space, shared creative/makerspace space, nonprofit workspace, and private studio space. Many of these uses can be accommodated on the ground floor of a mixed-use project.

At the public meeting attendees prioritized needs as follows:

- **Live/work Artist Housing: 42**
- **Shared Creative Space: 25**
- **Private Studio Space: 21**
- Nonprofit Workspace: 18
- Theater/Performance Space: 16
- Public Engagement/Community Space: 15
- Event Space: 12

Here's a more detailed look at the top categories:



LIVE/WORK ARTIST HOUSING is residential space where artists can work as well as live. Artspace live/work units meet standard residential codes. They are rental units financed in part by federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and are thus subject to certain restrictions. A common restriction limits units to households whose annual incomes are between 30% and 80% of the Area Median Income. Artspace live/work units include such artist-friendly design features as durable surfaces, large windows, high ceilings, and wide doorways. Both audiences prioritized housing as the most important space needed. If artists cannot afford to live in their own community they will not be able to create there either. This space is fundamental to the creation of any Artspace project.



SHARED CREATIVE SPACE offers shared equipment, education, and community for working creatively and/or making things. These spaces usually are run by nonprofits or businesses and can be accessed through a membership basis. They include co-working and makerspaces and can be designed for specific purposes such as ceramics, 3D printing, community kitchens, sculpture, and woodworking. These types of spaces provide access to space and/or equipment that is expensive, impractical, or, in some cases, hazardous. Interest in these types of spaces has increased nationally in the last few years. Shared creative space is a growing trend that is rooted in many traditional and contemporary art forms. It was mentioned that sculpture is a growing medium as the public art program continues, but there is no local sculpture casting or foundry space.

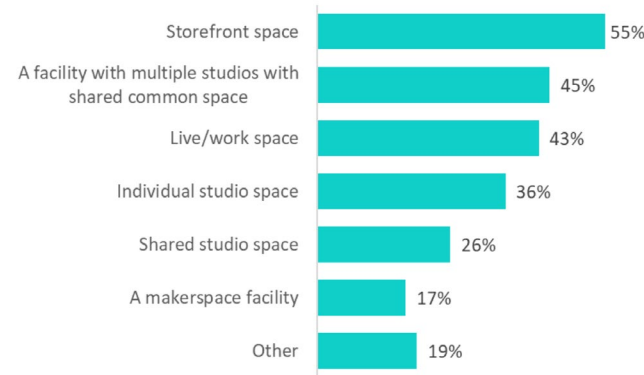


PRIVATE ARTIST STUDIO SPACE is commercial space specifically designed for the creation or practice of art. Studio space can be rented under an annual lease agreement or on an occasional or short-term basis by individual artists or small businesses. Uses can include fine arts studios, industrial workspace, teaching, offices, recording studios, soundproof rooms, etc. Keeping the sizes and price points flexible ensures greater market applicability. Within the Arts District, the Art Factory has a few of these spaces, and there are a few at The Commercial Center. There seems to be an overall lack of working studio spaces available for the community to lease. Many artists create at home for this reason.

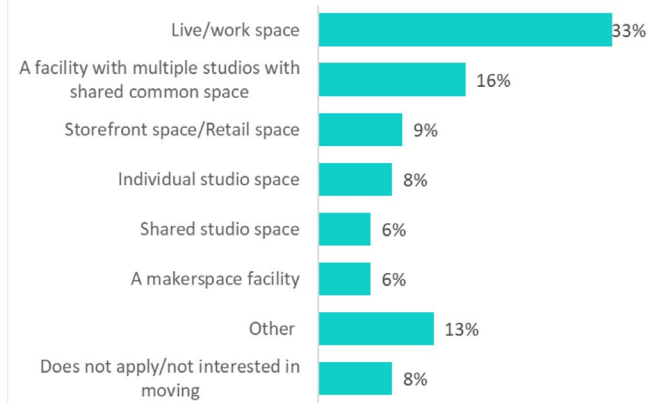
Space for Creative Practice/Business

Ideal Type of Space in the Arts District

District Artists/Creatives



Non-District Artists/Creatives



Note: District Artist numbers add to greater than 100% due to multiple response

Las Vegas Arts District

Source: Centro Las Vegas Arts District Survey 2023

Other Spaces of Interest

- An entrepreneurial hub
- Art galleries/gallery space
- Arts education
- Breweries, distilleries, coffee shops/restaurants (some don't want this)
- Cultural immersion experiences
- Family-friendly spaces
- Ghost kitchens
- Housing for workforce development programming for apprenticeship programs, etc.
- Makerspace
- Multi-purpose cultural spaces
- Non-commercialized community-organized presentation spaces for art and performance
- Open studio space (like WeWork but less computers and more fun)
- Pop-up gallery/performance/event space for those who can't afford a long-term lease
- Sculpture studios, ceramics, and metal shops
- Space that encourages a tight-knit community
- Workforce development and apprenticeship programs in the creative trades (woodworking, welding, sewing, etc.)
- Young, electric, thoughtful spaces

Although no project can be all things to all people, understanding how the community views these concepts and what spaces creatives need is extremely valuable. The list above was sourced from the artist and arts organization focus group. Other local space initiatives can incorporate some of these or may already have them. At the Artspace workshop at the 2nd Annual Arts & Culture Summit, we also learned about other creative space needs and about spaces that currently exist to rent at low cost. See page 58 for the findings from the workshop and corresponding survey.

ARTSPACE & TENANT PARTNERSHIPS

BUFFALO, NY - The Buffalo Arts and Technology Center (BATC) is an anchor tenant in our mixed-use affordable artist housing project in Buffalo. The BATC occupies 15,000 sq. ft. of space on the first and lower level of the historic electric car factory that houses 36 units of artist housing on floors 2-5. The focus of the BATC is two-fold: 1. To provide high quality art instruction to low-income children in the neighborhood, with an eye toward potential art careers and 2. To provide medical technology training to low-income adults in the neighborhood and assist with job placement at the nearby medical campus. There is a synergistic relationship with both the nearby hospital and the artist residents, some of whom act as faculty in the BATC program.



SEATTLE, WA - The Hoa Mai Vietnamese Bilingual Preschool located on the ground floor of Mt. Baker Station Artist Lofts, is the first bilingual Vietnamese-English daycare in Seattle. The Transit-Oriented Development is ideally located and offers a sliding scale for tuition based on family income. It serves the multicultural needs of the neighborhood.



Photo Sources: Buffalo Arts Tech Center // Artspace



The Arts Factory Las Vegas // Photo Credit: The Arts Factory

ARTIST PREFERENCE IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Artspace live/work projects are unlike most affordable housing in that we use an “artist preference” policy to fill vacancies.

For each project, we appoint a committee that includes diverse artists who are not applying to live in that project. The committee interviews income-qualified applicants to determine their commitment to their chosen art form or creative pursuit. It does not pass judgment on the quality of an applicant’s work, nor is it permitted to define what is or is not art. Artists do not need to earn any of their income from their art form.

Although the IRS challenged the “artist preference” policy in 2007, it dropped the challenge after the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 became law. That law states: “A project does not fail to meet the general public use requirement solely because of occupancy restrictions or preferences that favor tenants...who are involved in artistic or literary activities.” This clause was threatened again in December 2017, but through broad reaching advocacy efforts, the new Tax Cuts and Jobs Act retains the artist preference language in the final signed version of the law.

Local Leadership

Strong local leadership is essential to the success of any community-led development. Cross-sector stakeholders must all act in partnership to advocate effectively for the project and host community conversations. Without voices on the ground locally to keep communication flowing between Artspace and the community, there is little chance of success. It’s also important to make sure there is a groundswell of local leader support to make a project possible.

Artspace invests time and effort at the very beginning of a proposed project to work with the community to identify local leaders well-equipped by position, experience, and influence to serve as members of the Core Group.

Core Group

The local leaders who make creative projects possible can come from many sectors but must share a willingness to work toward a common vision. The Core Group that led the Preliminary Feasibility Study in Las Vegas exemplified this quality. The group had members of both public and private sector interests, a key factor in building support for an Artspace project.

The Core Group met for months prior to Artspace’s first virtual focus group. From the public sector, the group had representatives from the City’s Department of Neighborhood Services, Planning, and Economic Development, Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs, and the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority. From the Arts side, the Nevada Arts Council and Left of Center Gallery, and from the philanthropic side, the Mayor’s Fund.

Several members of the group toured the Loveland Artspace Campus in Loveland, Colorado, to get acquainted with the Artspace model for live/work housing.

It was great to see Las Vegas community members who had not worked together before being part of this initiative. The City of Las Vegas took the lead in planning the public meeting, and we were impressed with the turnout and range of community members who participated. Approximately 150 community members attended and participated in the public meeting.

Civic Leaders

Artspace held a conversation with Finance and Civic Leaders at The Center and discussed potential partnerships and civic priorities. The prevalence of vacant lots and the complexities around the funding sector were all brought to light.

Our overall impression is that there is space downtown and near the Arts District to accommodate a project, but almost all is privately owned. One of the core group members believes the mayor from North Las Vegas would be interested in this type of development in that municipality.

A project like this also would need to dovetail with the other strategies the Arts District is putting in place, such as the Business Improvement District (BID) and the efforts to explore rezoning tied to requirements and incentives that support the arts.

Potential Partnerships

Both formal and informal partnerships can help Artspace-like projects address multiple community goals. We rely on local leaders to bring important opportunities for such partnerships to our attention and to make meaningful introductions.

Participants were asked to identify potential partners that could enrich an arts facility project or be complementary. These could be organizations that need space or advocates. Responses included:

- A Public Fit Theater Company
- Art Websites
- Arts District (18b)
- Clarity Creative
- Favorly Agency
- Fermented Beverage Businesses
- H Street Development
- Indigenous AF
- Las Vegas Artist Guild
- L’Octaine Apartments
- Mike Tea Opera House
- Nevada Clay Guild
- Nevada Humanities
- NuWu Art
- PF Gallery
- Photo Bang Bang
- Positively Arts
- Scrambled Eggs
- Vegas Theater Company
- Las Vegas-Clark County Library District
- Twyn Art Supply

Funding and Financing

An Artspace project represents a substantial financial investment for the community where it is located. Strong city and state leaders often identify and prioritize funding for projects they feel strongly align with their community goals. A typical project of 50 to 70 units of affordable housing for artists, plus community and commercial space, can cost \$20-25 million. Predevelopment expenses, the “soft” costs such as architects’ fees, environmental assessments, and housing applications must be met before construction can begin, are usually about \$800,000 regardless of the project size. See Appendix A for the full path to an Artspace project.

Artspace relies on its track record and 40+ years of national experience to tap into federal programs, such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Historic Tax Credits (HTC), HOME and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and Federal Home Loan Bank grants to provide long-term equity for development projects. These programs, and others like them, exist to encourage the development of affordable housing, the rehabilitation of historic buildings, economic revitalization of neighborhoods, and other public purposes.

2023 Figures for Clark County, Nevada Metro Area
Area Median Income (AMI) and Residential Rent - 4-Person AMI: \$83,900

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	INCOME (30-60% AMI)	INCOME (80% AMI)	# OF BEDROOMS	MAX. RENT (30-60% AMI)	MAX. RENT (80% AMI)
1	\$18,210-\$36,420	\$48,560	Efficiency	\$455-\$910	\$1,214
2	\$20,790-\$41,580	\$55,440	1	\$487-\$975	\$1,300
3	\$23,400-\$46,800	\$62,400	2	\$585-\$1,170	\$1,560
4	\$25,980-\$51,960	\$69,280	3	\$675-\$1,351	\$1,802

Source: novoco.com

In order to make these projects financially feasible, the local community plays a significant role in the funding and fundraising effort. In Las Vegas, Artspace would need a land or building donation as well as predevelopment funds. Once a site is selected, we will further explore how Artspace can obtain affordable housing allocations in a combination of CDBG, HOME funds, and private philanthropic support.

Philanthropy

Philanthropy is an important tool for funding Artspace developments. This comes in the form of gifts from foundations, corporations, and, in some cases, individuals. Several of the key people we met during the course of this study are important connectors to the private funding community. Major funders and individual donors to the arts should be considered, as well as the private and foundation funders listed on the following pages.

BRAINSTORMING POTENTIAL FUNDERS

The civic and finance leaders focus group participants included elected members of city and state government, local and regional foundations, banks, and community development financial institutions. Representation from the City of Las Vegas, Clark County, the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority (SNRHA), Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA), the Mayor's Fund, and Wells Fargo were at the table.

Tapping into the private philanthropic sources needs to be done through a proper connection when Artspace is further along in the process. Vegas lacks the deep philanthropic roots that older cities have, but the money is there; it will just need to be approached differently. The casino and entertainment-related funds have potential once the right connection is established.

We asked the attendees to identify possible public, private, and philanthropic resources for a potential Las Vegas project and share ideas about where it should be located. This prestigious group was interested in Artspace's approach and the potential a mixed-use artist housing project could bring to the city. The group expressed that there are resources for projects that are a priority for the community but that Nevada is a small state. Potential private funding sources that were identified were all based in Nevada and included:

- [Nevada Community Foundation](#): Like most community foundations, the Nevada Community Foundation has a pool of funding they allocate as well as donor advised funds.
- [Nevada Women's Philanthropy](#): Although grants are typically small in terms of capital grants, affordable housing is an interest area.
- [San Manuel Band of Mission Indians](#): One of their interest areas is housing, along with arts and music.
- [MGM Resorts Foundation](#): In recent years, MGM has distributed \$3M annually to local nonprofit organizations.
- [Caesars Foundation](#): The Foundation has a very broad objective to strengthen organizations and programs in the communities where employees and their families live and work.

- [Blackstone Charitable Foundation](#): This Foundation deploys its financial and human capital in support of programs that bridge opportunity gaps and support more equitable and thriving communities. Special emphasis is also given to regions where their employees live and work.
- [Rogers Foundation](#) is one of the largest privately funded foundations in the State of Nevada. One of their top interest areas is the Arts.
- [The Mayor's Fund for Las Vegas LIFE](#): This fund provides a vehicle for corporate and philanthropic partners to support innovative initiatives and city priorities that improve the quality of life for all Las Vegas residents. The four main pillars of giving are: Livability, Innovation, Future and Education.
- [Nevada Clean Energy Fund](#): Provides grants and technical expertise to multi-family developers who meet their energy threshold standards.
- [The \(Oakland\) A's Community Fund](#), the philanthropic arm of the Oakland A's sports team which is scheduled to move to Las Vegas in 2024.

Potential Public Sources

LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS

The largest source of funding for most Artspace mixed-use residential projects is the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and state housing agencies in accordance with Section 42 of the IRS Code.

LIHTCs come in two varieties, known as 9% credits and 4% credits, after the variable in the formula used to calculate them. Of these, 9% credits are much more popular with developers because they can pay for up to two-thirds of a project's construction budget, more than twice as much as 4% credits. Therefore, they are extremely competitive, and it is not uncommon for a developer to apply two or more times before receiving an award; 4% credits, which take the form of tax-exempt bonds, are easier to obtain.

In Nevada, LIHTCs are administered by the State of Nevada Housing Division ("Nevada Housing"), a division of the Department of Business and Industry. Application rounds for 9% LIHTC are once annually in May, with preliminary decisions about applicant awards in June and final decisions in July. In 2023, there were eight projects that received an allocation of 9% LIHTC. Of those eight, two were in Clark County – one in Las Vegas proper and one in North Las Vegas.

Recent LIHTC awards in Clark County bode well for an Artspace initiative, and we believe it is a viable model for Las Vegas.

The most recent 9% LIHTC awards in Clark County include a \$15.5M, 50-unit new construction project, A Place to Call Home, developed by KG Development Group, at 3460 N. Rancho Dr. in Las Vegas (Ward 5), and a \$21.5M, 60-unit new construction project, Pearson Pines, developed by Nevada HAND, at 2510 Morton Ave. in North Las Vegas.

There is no specific cap or limit of 9% LIHTC dollars per project, but applications with per unit costs under \$285K receive more points in the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP).

The Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority is the local leader in the development and management of more than 1,100 affordable housing units, as well as 11,000 voucher units throughout the City of Las Vegas, Clark County, and southern Nevada. The Housing Authority develops and manages both Section 8 housing units (for families with incomes below 30% AMI) and Section 42 Low-Income Tax Credits units (for families with incomes between 30% and 80% AMI). On the private, nonprofit side, Nevada HAND is the local and statewide leader in the development and management of affordable housing units with a focus on households between 30% and 80% of AMI. As of 2023, more than 8,000 children, seniors, and families called a Nevada HAND housing unit home in one of their 35 projects across the state.

In 2023, Nevada HAND announced the start of construction on a new 125-unit affordable housing community dedicated to low-income seniors at the corner of Buffalo Drive and Cactus Avenue. This project received an allocation of 4% LIHTC with corresponding bond financing.

The Buffalo Cactus Senior Apartments are part of nearly 2,000 units under development by Nevada HAND and targeted to seniors who are between 30% and 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).

In recent years, the Governor and the Nevada State Legislature allocated \$500 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to advance multi-family, LIHTC-funded projects in Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Reno, Henderson, and Clark County. Many of these projects received ARPA funds in 2022 and 2023 and were developed by the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority and Nevada HAND. At this stage, those funds have been allocated with no future pool of funding to replace them.

FEDERAL LIHTC

As in all states, the 9% LIHTC awards are highly competitive, with an application round once each year in May. The State looks for a 10% match from the local government (typically cities and counties) in the form of a local housing trust fund, CDBG, or HOME award to be eligible.

A 9% and 4% allocation of LIHTC can be combined into a singular project. Called “twinning,” Nevada Housing has been providing a points incentive for developments that combine 9% and 4% LIHTCs in its qualified allocation plan (QAP).

According to Nevada Housing, the program has worked well, but the deals are complex, requiring developers to divide a project into two separate legal structures —one with 9% credits and another with 4% credits and tax-exempt bonds.

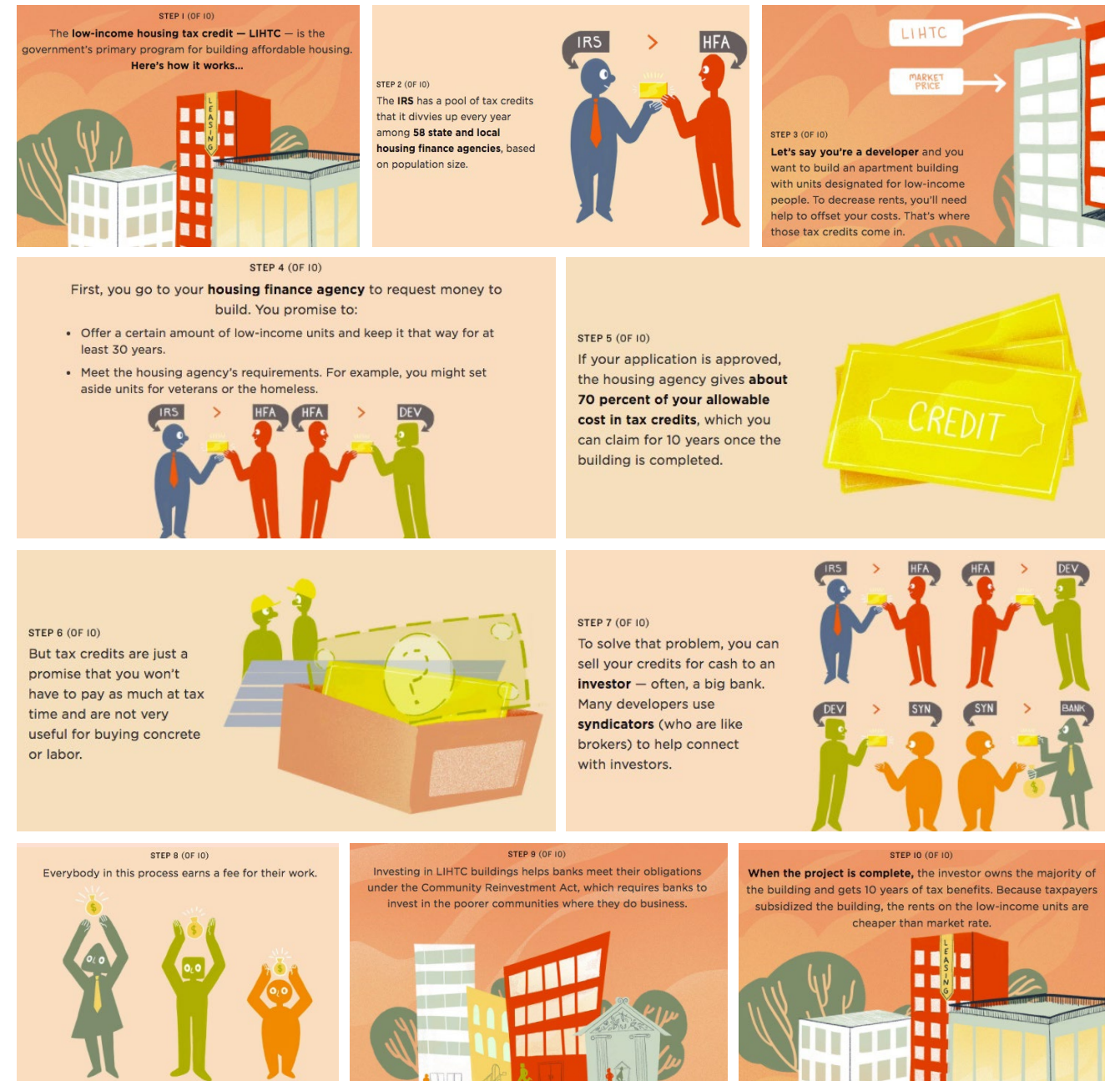
STATE LIHTC

In 2023, Governor Steve Sisolak signed legislation that creates a transferable state housing tax credit with an annual cap of \$10 million. The program expires on January 1, 2030. While a small and very competitive pool of funding, it is available to fill gaps in federally-funded LIHTC projects.



Nancy Good with Core Contemporary Gallery // Photo Credit: Artspace

UNDERSTANDING LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS (LIHTC)



Source: NPR, Illustrations by Chelsea Beck/NPR. Explainer by Meg Anderson, Alicia Cypress, Alyson Hurt, Laura Sullivan and Ariel Zambelich/NPR and Emma Schwartz/Frontline.

OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS

This is a preliminary list of other potential public sources discussed during this study, as well as other Nevada funding sources that could support a development project.

- **Redevelopment Authority Funds.** Currently at \$20 million, this pool of funding can be used by the City to purchase property or provide capital improvements to a site. The RDA was created in 1986 to revitalize downtown Las Vegas and the surrounding aging commercial districts. The RDA works with developers, property owners, and the community to recruit businesses, create new jobs, eliminate blight and diversify the economy. The primary source of funding is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The area in and around the Arts District has been in an RDA area since 1986.¹
- **Clearinghouse CDFI** is an experienced lender and investor in New Markets Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and Historic Tax Credits. Clearinghouse is a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), as well as an investor, consultant, and lender (including bridge loans) in the affordable housing arena.
- **Federal Home Loan Bank.** The San Francisco office serves the State of Nevada and is one of twelve government-sponsored Federal Home Loan Banks that provide equity to support housing financing and community investments. In Artspace's experience, average awards have been in the \$250-\$500K range. Recent awards have been larger and in the \$500K-\$1M range.
- **Federal Historic Tax Credits (HTCs).** To qualify for the federal program, a property must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places either individually or as a contributing member of a designated historic district. Both programs are administered in Nevada through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
- **HOME Program.** A federal program that provides funding to state and local governments to fund affordable housing developments. Las Vegas is an Entitlement Community that receives a dedicated allocation of HOME funds. City HOME funds can be combined with State HOME funds for projects that meet all the criteria for the City and State. Combined with CDBG, the 2023/2024 City of Las Vegas allocation was \$11.3 million.
- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** are tools that cities can use for a range of activities that benefit low- and moderate-income individuals or prevent or eliminate slums and blight. 20% are typically used for infrastructure improvements. Both of the industrial sites that are part of this study could qualify for infrastructure improvements. Las Vegas's CDBG current target area is in the Arts District. Current priorities also focus on housing, with an interest in density.
- **National Housing Trust Fund.** The State of Nevada is a grantee of the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) allocation from HUD. Nevada is required to use at least 80 percent of each annual grant for rental housing. The annual allocation is approximately \$3 million.
- **Account for Affordable Housing Trust Fund.** Established in 1989, this statewide program is used to provide incentives to develop and support affordable rental housing and homeownership affordability through the acquisition, new construction, reconstruction, or moderate or substantial rehabilitation of non-luxury housing with suitable amenities, including real property acquisition, site improvement, conversion, demolition, and other expenses, including financing costs. The 2023 allocation of funding was \$4 million for Clark County and \$1.9 million for the City of Las Vegas.
- **Inflation Reduction Act.** Building owners will be able to invest in technologies, such as solar panels, heat pumps, wind-resistant roofing, insulation, low embodied carbon materials, and other measures that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make properties healthier and safer for residents in the face of more severe weather and a changing climate. The program's implementing notice and Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) will provide a range of grant and loan funding options for multifamily housing owners with varying levels of expertise with green retrofits.

¹ <https://files.lasvegasnevada.gov/eud/Redevelopment-Agency-Area-Map.pdf>

Example Projects

ARTSPACE MT. BAKER LOFTS // SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Located adjacent to the Mt. Baker Light Rail Station on Seattle's Central Link lightrail line, Artspace Mt. Baker Lofts aims to jump-start the transformation of the neighborhood from a car-oriented environment into an "urban village" whose residents choose walking, biking, or riding mass transit over cars. The mixed-use development boasts 57 units of affordable live/work space for creatives and their families and commercial space for arts-friendly businesses and nonprofit organizations.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND FINANCING ARTSPACE MT. BAKER LOFTS // SEATTLE, WASHINGTON		
PUBLIC SOURCES		
Low Income Housing Tax Credits (9%)	\$7,473,319	41%
Seattle Office of Housing, Levy Funds	\$5,500,000	30%
Washington State Housing Trust Fund	\$900,000	5%
PRIVATE SOURCES		
Residential Mortgage	\$1,350,000	7%
Artspace Sponsor Loan (Philanthropic)	\$922,000	5%
Purchase Price Hold Back	\$641,741	4%
Commercial Mortgage	\$600,000	3%
FHLB AHP Sponsor Loan	\$500,000	3%
Deferred Developer Fee	\$198,185	2%
TOTAL	\$18,085,245	100%



Photo Source: Artspace.org

RODERICK ARTSPACE LOFTS // EL PASO, TEXAS

This 51-unit development opened in 2016 for a total project cost of \$12.7 million. It includes 8,000 square feet of commercial and community space. The gallery and workshop space provide artists and community groups space for meetings, events, gallery shows, exhibitions, and performances. The development partners were the City of El Paso, El Paso Community Foundation and Ford Foundation. On Artspace's recent visit to the building with the Las Cruces Core Group, we heard about the impact this space has had on the artist's lives, but also on how this building and its residents have added vibrancy to the area. Residents serve on the downtown councils and boards now too, bringing new voices to these sorts of institutions.

“These types of projects not only generate a place for artists to live and to showcase their work. They tend to attract other types of businesses drawn to the location by the concentration of people. It's a tried and proven model.”

Sean McGlynn, Former Deputy City Manager, City of El Paso



Photo Source: Artspace.org

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND FINANCING RODERICK ARTSPACE LOFTS // EL PASO, TEXAS		
PUBLIC SOURCES		
Low Income Housing Tax Credits (9%)	\$9,096,329	72%
City of El Paso - HOME First Mortgage	\$500,000	4%
PRIVATE SOURCES		
Affordable Housing Program Load (Wells Fargo and FHL Dallas)	\$500,000	5%
Sponsor Loan: Predevelopment Funding	\$350,000	3%
Sponsor Loan: Green Building Grant Program	\$200,000	2%
Sponsor Loan: El Paso Community Foundation	\$1,700,000	13%
Deferred Developer Fee	\$353,899	3%
TOTAL	\$12,700,000	100%

Potential Sites

During a Preliminary Feasibility visit, Artspace's primary goal is not to choose a site but to identify candidates for further study should the project move forward. Factors considered include location, size, physical conditions, adaptability to project concept(s), construction type, zoning, land use restrictions, ease of acquisition, and potential for sustained impact on the broader community.

Given our mission to keep our projects affordable in perpetuity, Artspace gives high priority to sites that can be conveyed below market rate. Based on Artspace's experience in other like-sized communities and on the feedback from our in-person visit in January 2024, Artspace estimates that a building in the 50-70 unit range would be well-suited for Las Vegas. For a project of this size, a minimum of ½ acre and possibly more, depending on parking, would need to be assembled.

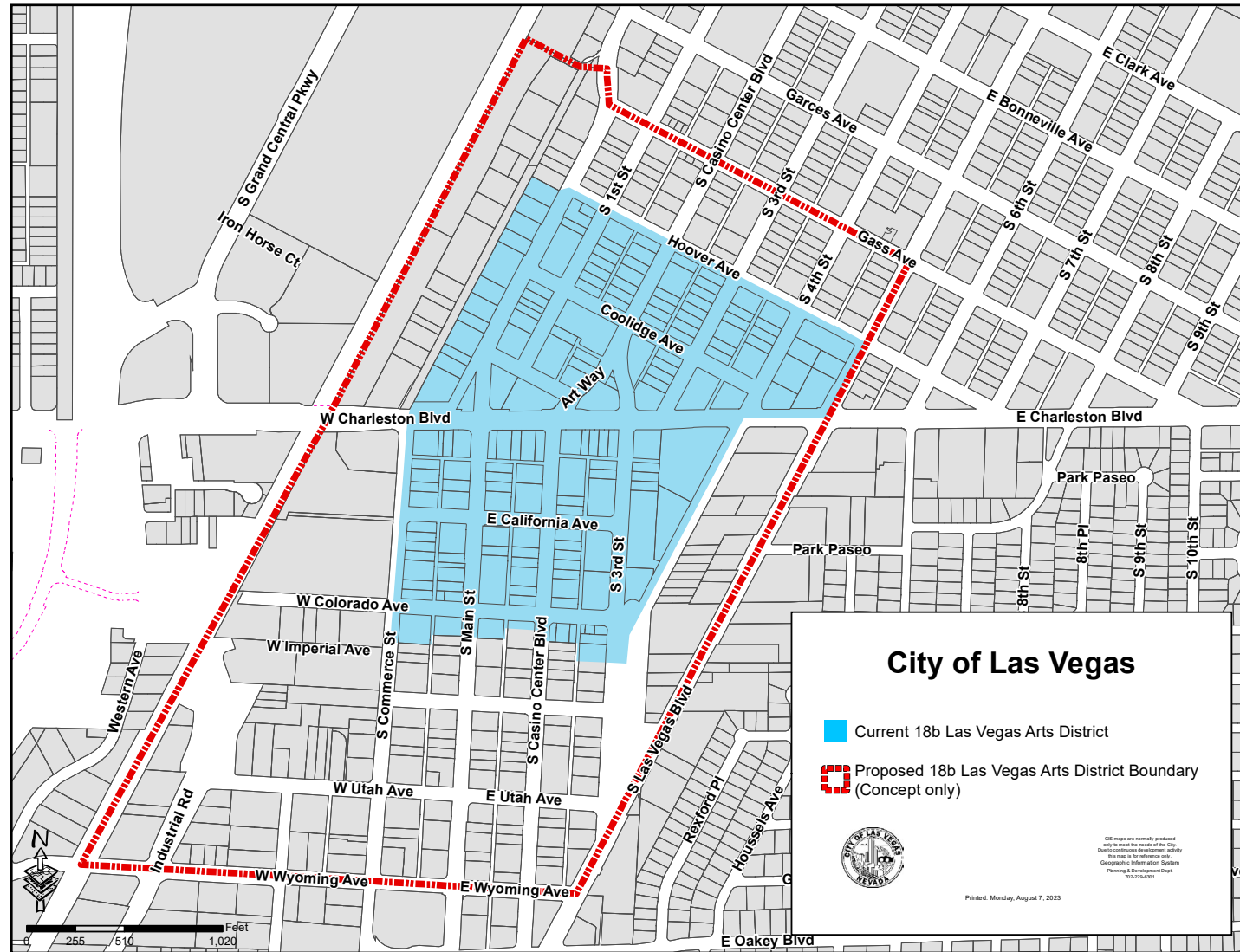
WHERE ARTISTS/CREATIVES WANT TO BE

We asked the audiences of the artist and arts organization focus group and public meeting where they felt an Artspace-style project would be best suited. The City has envisioned this space to be in the Arts District, but it is beneficial to hear directly from the creative sector in their own words. Many people felt already priced out by the Arts District and thought other areas of the city were better options. The following areas were mentioned:

- **801 Las Vegas Blvd. S (x2)**
- A new curated tourism destination
- **Anywhere that is affordable (x2)**
- **Arts District (x8)**
- At the old Bando
- Boulevard Mall
- **Cashman Complex (x3)**
- **Charleston/North of Charleston (x3)**
- Chinatown/Spring Mountain Rd.
- Closed big box retailers
- **Commercial Center (x8)**
- **Downtown (x7)**
- **North Las Vegas (x4)**
- East end of the Arts District
- **East Las Vegas (x2)**
- Eastern and Washington
- Eastern and Charleston
- **Empty lots (x4)**
- First Friday area
- **Historic Westside (x4)**
- **Huntridge Theater (x4)**
- Kmart Shopping center at Buffalo & Flamingo
- L'Octaine Urban Apartments
- Medical District
- **Mission Linen Building (x3)**
- Molasky properties on Casino Center
- **Near food access (x2)**
- Near the Smith Center
- Neighborhoods with nature and cleaner air
- **Next to the art museum (x2)**
- Not downtown (away from the strip)
- Not East Fremont
- Old casinos or hotels
- Old city building
- Old motels on Fremont
- Old Walgreen site Las Vegas Blvd & Charleston
- On the strip
- Repurposed defunct properties
- Sahara and Valley View
- **Somewhere accessible (x3)**
- **Southern Las Vegas (x2)**
- Strip malls West on Sahara
- Summerlin
- **Symphony Park (x2)**
- The Green Door
- The Stitcher Building
- The Uncommons
- **University District (x3)**
- **Vacant car dealership (x2)**
- West Las Vegas & Sunset

Site Tour Feedback

Our Core Group selected six vacant parcels (some with smaller buildings that would be torn down in a redevelopment scenario) for the Artspace team to tour. All were privately owned and located within the expanded Arts District boundaries.



Source: City of Las Vegas, 2024

While all of the sites we visited had potential for reuse as creative spaces of some nature, most had significant drawbacks related to the cost of acquisition. Artspace sees the only opportunity for this type of development would be through a property that is purchased by the City and conveyed to Artspace for the purpose of creating a long-term affordable mixed-use project for the city's creative sector.

All six sites are in a Qualified Census Tract (QCT), have maximum zoning flexibility, including zero parking requirements, and are in a priority area for the City's redevelopment funding (RDA), making this area highly desirable.

Of the six sites, the three that were most desirable were those with contiguous sites that could be assembled and that are owned by the same entities. They were also all large enough to accommodate a 5-story building – 4 stories over a podium for commercial and community space.

Artspace would like to continue to explore new site opportunities as the second phase of the feasibility process unfolds. As of our second visit to Las Vegas for the Arts & Culture Summit, on February 28-29, potential new opportunities are reflected here. The top three sites are all centrally located within the Arts District and are large enough to accommodate a 50-70 unit mixed-use development.

- Site 1: 1205-1217 South Commerce Street – 1.23 acres
- Site 2: 1030-1050 South Main Street – .73 acres
- Site 3: Garces between S. Casino Center Blvd and S. 1st St. – 1.71 acres

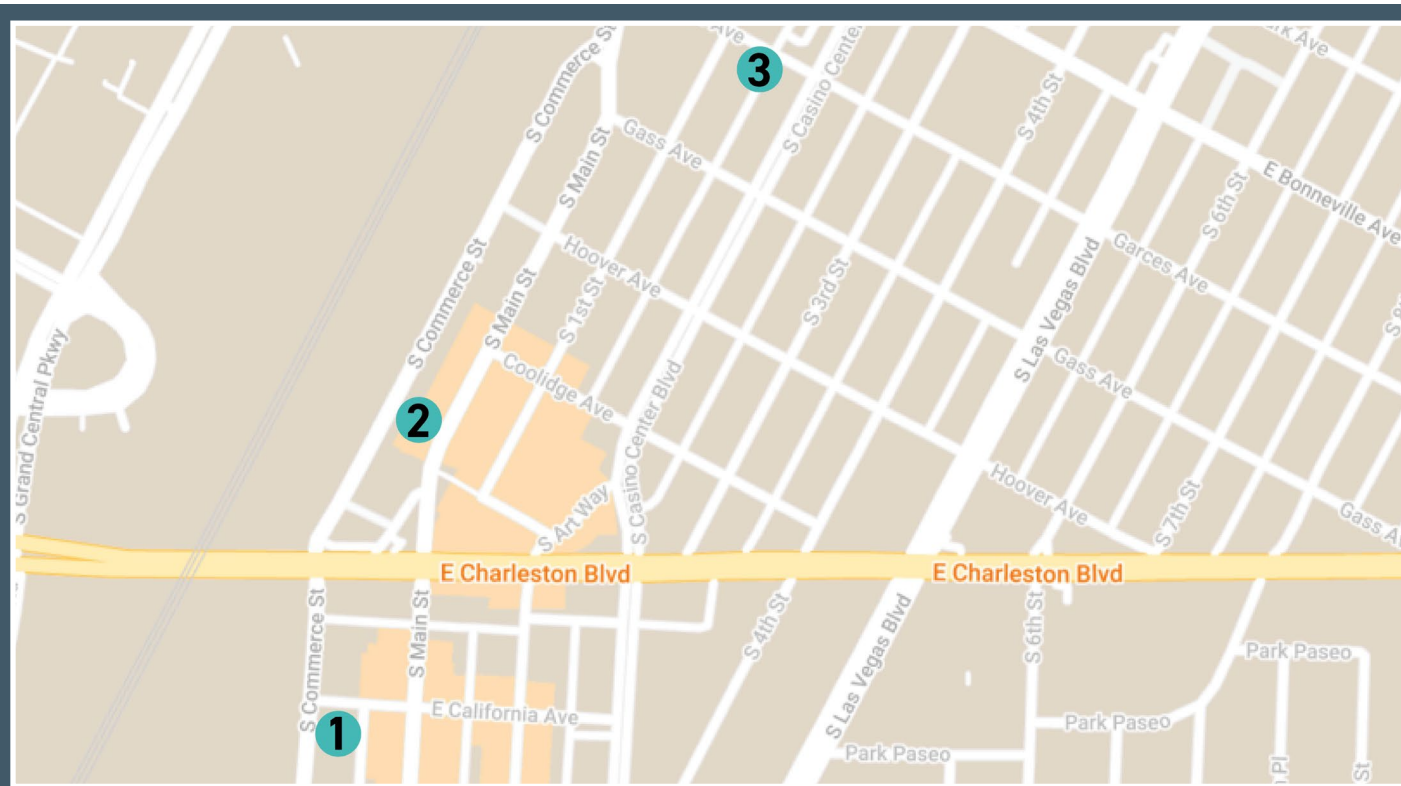
Additional sites noted here:

NEW CITY PARKING GARAGE (STARTS CONSTRUCTION THIS YEAR)

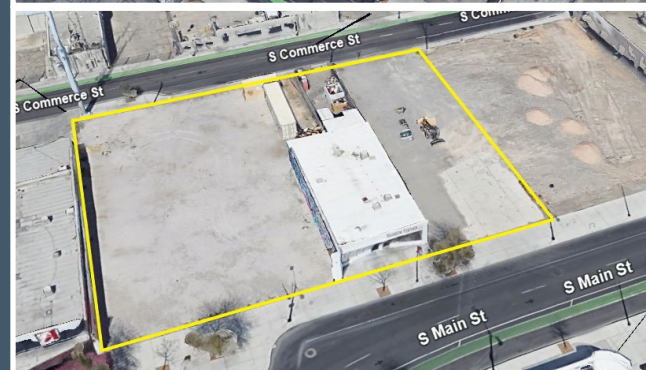
It was determined that the 1.3-acre parking garage site at 201 E. Utah was not a feasible site for an Artspace project at this time. The City is prepping the site for future levels of parking above the currently planned-five levels.

TOD AND TRAVELERS MOTEL SITE

Another potential site not included in the top site matrix is the TOD Motel and Travelers Motel site at 1506-1508 South Las Vegas Blvd. This .63 acre site may be too tight and would certainly be a teardown to accommodate 50-70 units of housing and ground floor community/commercial space. There are two owners which also makes site acquisition more challenging and potentially take more time though the owner of the TOD portion of the site recently had their license revoked at the 3/20/24 City Council meeting.



**Site 1:
1205-1217 South Commerce Street**



**Site 2:
1030-1050 South Main Street**



**Site 3:
Garces between S. 1st St. and
S. Casino Center Blvd**

FEATURES	ARTS DISTRICT SITES
Location (Address):	Multiple addresses: Site 1: 1205-1217 South Commerce Street Site 2: 1030-1050 South Main Street Site 3: Garces between S. 1st St. and S. Casino Center Blvd
Acquisition (cost and ease of acquiring):	All privately owned. Site 1: Quad Sevens LLC Site 2: Wayne Laska Site 3: RTC (Regional Transportation Commission)
Size (scaled to project concept?):	Site 1: 1.23 acres Site 2: .73 acres Site 3: 1.71 acres Site 1 has several smaller 1-story buildings which would be teardowns in addition to vacant land. Site 2 is also known as the "Treehouse" site. It is across the street from the Burlesque Hall of Fame and kitty-corner from The English Hotel. Site 3 is kitty-corner from the Bonneville Transit Center and on a recently completed "Complete Street" project area.
Accessibility (connection to audience and community):	Sites are all in the Arts District and would create a unique opportunity to create a cluster/density of spaces that reflect the arts and entrepreneurial spirit of the District.
Parking capability:	Zero parking requirement but will be a consideration for marketing.
Suitability of site for intended uses:	The mixture of residential, commercial, and possibly even light industrial will be in the making in the Arts District for many years to come. Opportunity to create a new and vibrant community that enables Las Vegas artists to stay in the area.
Condition of the building and land (roof, environmental, etc.):	There is not a history of the previous land uses in the immediate area typically associated with the need for mitigation but Environmental Phase I studies will eventually be required. There may be infrastructure issues related to water and sewer.

FEATURES	ARTS DISTRICT SITES
Zoning (for intended uses):	Mixed-use; yes.
Potential for Support (public and private):	Mixed-use live/work residential would amplify the presence of creatives in the City and add residential units in one of the City's priority areas. The presence of creatives will also attract other market rate residential and commercial businesses. The City supports density in the Arts District.
Designated area of investment? (e.g. opportunity zones, redevelopment district):	TIF, Opportunity Zone, RDA, QCT
Intangibles:	Complete Streets program underway since 2022 in this area on nine streets. Increased livability is a huge goal of this program. Now the area needs more housing, especially affordable housing for 30-80% of Area Median Income (AMI).
Willingness of sellers:	Unknown at this time.
Summary:	Excellent locations and size. Opportunity for creative partnerships. Potential to amplify the "arts" in the Arts District while creating active community-based uses on visible vacant lots that are not currently contributing back to the City. Redevelopment of any of the Arts District sites would further "anchor" the District and create a critical mass of working artists and their families which would further catalyze future developments of all kinds and support the goals of the 2050 Master Plan.

SITE SELECTION DISCLAIMER

Typically, Artspace identifies the actual site only 50% of the time during the first feasibility visit. These findings are preliminary and based on currently available information. Much can and often does change between the writing of this study and the actual site selection. That said, if the City is able to assemble one of the Arts District sites, it is very likely to be the location for a future Artspace project.

Artspace believes a mixed-use affordable project with a focus on diverse artists, creatives, and entrepreneurs can make a significant difference in modeling the future of the Arts District and make it a welcoming place and space for all.

IV. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Las Vegas is well-positioned to pursue an affordable live/work mixed-use facility for artists and creatives. It has most of the six key components Artspace looks for in its feasibility study: breadth of a creative sector, City and arts leadership in place, clear need and interest in the proposed project concept, overlapping priorities and goals that can be addressed, and robust participation in the engagement during this study. It is lacking slightly on the sites and funding resources, but both components will be further addressed in the second step of the feasibility process happening later this Spring or early Summer.

The local arts and cultural sector has been overlooked and under-resourced, especially as it comes to the future of the Arts District. A project like this may be the impetus to weave the arts, affordable housing, strategic planning for the Arts District, and the City's economic development goals together. Vegas is at a key juncture to put solutions in place now to support the businesses and entrepreneurs in the Arts District, given the tipping point the Arts District is facing. The strategies Centro has set forth beyond affordable housing also address this concern.

Our recommendations are based on listening to the community and the feedback we heard. Overall, Las Vegas artists ranked the following creative sector services very low. In this section, Artspace Consulting offers some best practices and case studies from communities where we have worked to provide ideas on how to strengthen the creative sector in each of the six key components that were a part of this study.

What the Las Vegas artist and arts organizations said...

How would you rate the availability of the following for the creative sector in Las Vegas? Rank on a scale of 1-5



Artist/Art Organization Focus Group Space Rankings

The following chart provides a summary of the Artspace findings with additional case studies from other markets.

CRITERIA	FINDING	CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATION	CASE STUDY
<p>Alignment with Broader Community Goals</p>	<p>Preserving Affordability, Activating Vacant Lots, Sustaining Creative Businesses and Nonprofits, and Supporting a diverse cultural community were the top goals identified by the 200+ respondents that Artspace met.</p>	<p>The Arts District is the “hot new thing” real estate wise, driving up land costs, making it challenging to build affordable housing.</p> <p>In the Equity in Space conversation, most of the participants said they did not feel welcome in the Arts District and there was an overall lack of diverse representation.</p> <p>Many vacant lots are prime for redevelopment, but all are privately-owned.</p>	<p>Continue intentional outreach and engagement, as future developments could have diverse businesses on the ground floor which very much aligns with the goal of supporting a diverse cultural community.</p> <p>Establish a service organization/ foundation that can act as a fiscal sponsor for creative businesses and smaller nonprofit organizations. This could be the Nevada Arts Council, the Nevada Community Foundation or 18b in the Arts District. This is one solution to growing capacity for small arts and cultural nonprofits and for them to successfully take on leases in response to sustaining creative businesses.</p>	<p>Artspace has seen, firsthand, how the presence of a local service organization can strengthen the sector.</p> <p>Fiscal Sponsorship examples to support creative businesses and nonprofits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springboard for the Arts in St. Paul, MN • Spaceworks Tacoma in Tacoma, WA • Artist Trust in Seattle, WA • Antenna in New Orleans, LA. <p>Easily accessible grants and funding resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CultureSource in Detroit, MI
<p>Project Concept</p>	<p>Live/work housing was the highest prioritized type of space needed. A mixed-use concept would provide much needed affordable housing and continue the goals of the Arts District.</p> <p>As affordability pressures increase and Las Vegas popularity grows, an Artspace project would create intentional affordable space for the creative sector.</p> <p>No one central gathering space for artists and creative businesses.</p>	<p>A middle-class dream is slowly becoming unattainable, and artists have left the Arts District.</p> <p>Historic high rent increases in housing costs since 2019.</p> <p>There is no current hub/venue for emerging artists and lack of studio space, artist-in-residency space, gallery spaces and other community gathering spaces.</p>	<p>Look at matchmaking the type of spaces the community wants and what exists and maintain a database of available spaces (see Appendix C from 2nd Annual Arts & Culture Summit workshop).</p> <p>Support and curate space sharing arrangements from the feedback from the Summit.</p> <p>Look at matchmaking the type of spaces the community wants and what exists and maintain a database of available spaces (see Appendix C from 2nd Annual Arts & Culture Summit workshop).</p> <p>Support and curate space sharing arrangements from the feedback from the Summit.</p> <p>Explore models of a flex community-run arts + culture space in the Arts District.</p> <p>Consider playing a role to keep L’Octaine Apartments as long-term artist housing as market forces pressure this development to turn market rate.</p>	<p>Peerspace, an AirBnB-style concept for unique venues for meetings, events, pop-ups etc. is a website nationwide. Las Vegas currently has limited listings in the Arts District. Arts Square's flex studio/loft is one of the few mentioned.</p> <p>The People's Building in Aurora, CO - a former ski shop turned community hub. The city invested over \$2 million to convert the space into a gallery, flexible event space for cultural events, workshops, meetings, independent artists, musicians, dancers, and event planners. It is a City of Aurora-owned, non-profit space, curated and managed by a dedicated employee.</p> <p>Spaceworks Tacoma launched in 2010 as a joint initiative of the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber to approach community transformation and small business development in a new way. The City and Chamber envisioned creative business, events and art installations creating visitor destinations and driving new consumers into underutilized areas. This has evolved into a decentralized business incubator and anchor for the creative class in downtown and beyond. Since launching in June 2010, Spaceworks has worked with over 400 artists and creative individuals and organizations in at least 50 sites around Tacoma.</p>

CRITERIA	FINDING	CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATION	CASE STUDY
<p>Creative Sector</p>	<p>There were many unique and very local cultural assets mentioned through our informal data collection methods. The sector is seen as under-resourced.</p> <p>Given Las Vegas's international reputation for entertainment, more support for the homegrown local Las Vegas sector should be encouraged.</p> <p>The arts sector was historically very transient, but more people are putting down roots and want to invest in the future of the city.</p> <p>The City's Parks, Recreation, and Arts Department deserves praise for their robust programs. The artists we met seemed hungry for more opportunities to connect. The Second Annual Arts and Culture Summit is a great example of the City leading in this way.</p>	<p>Challenges finding space for the 40+ individual artists and organizations who attended on 2/29.</p> <p>"Brewery Row" moniker and tension.</p> <p>Lack of full-time or dedicated staff leading the Arts District.</p> <p>Equity and access issues for artists of color in the Arts District.</p> <p>Lack of technical support for either unincorporated businesses or in real estate.</p> <p>With new space on the horizon, there needs to be arts orgs ready to run a business and sign leases: create training programs for creative entrepreneurs in basic business development skills that include how to successfully lease space will mutually benefit both parties.</p>	<p>Create a map of the City's cultural/ creative assets in the Arts District. 18b would be a natural partner for this, since they have a list on their website. Would help the perception that arts are leaving the Arts District and highlight non-conventional spaces that also include some arts-related programs.</p> <p>The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department offers services and resources to include the provision of technical assistance to creative businesses as well as individual artists. Consider developing a specific capacity-building program for "Arts District creatives" either through 18b or the City that responds to Arts District creatives' needs and provides business development skills, and potentially funding opportunities.</p> <p>Continue networking opportunities for creatives. There were new faces at our meetings and continuing to build that network for this sector would be useful.</p> <p>Keep in touch with the 200+ participants in this study. Share this Report and offer more engagement opportunities.</p> <p>Publicize available grants such as the Nevada Governor's Office of Federal Assistance page.</p>	<p>Cultural Asset Map Example: Northwest Arkansas, Asset Maps, 2019</p> <p>Build on the recent Public Art Plan and if appropriate and there is the community will, expand the public art requirements to include private developments over a certain amount, as many cities are doing. This provides an opportunity for more local artists to apply for these sorts of commissions.</p> <p>City of Minneapolis B-Tap, Business Assistance program.</p> <p>Artspace runs a program, called Artspace Immersion, which takes a cohort-style approach to assisting arts and cultural organizations with technical assistance for their space-related projects.</p> <p>A resource to garner ideas around the process of strengthening an arts district is the Call Yourself Creative toolkit, created by Colorado Creative Industries and The Creativity Lab of Colorado.</p> <p>Explore different forms of governance models for non-residential spaces and look at models around the State. 28 Colorado Creative Districts for examples of shared models and activities.</p>
<p>Local Leadership</p>	<p>Strong City support. The Complete Streets program has greatly enhanced this area and is a clear planning focus.</p> <p>Centro's studies have laid the groundwork for the Arts District of the future.</p> <p>It was great to see Las Vegas community members who had not worked together before be part of this initiative.</p> <p>Nevada Housing Coalition looking into new affordable housing solutions and very interested in the Artspace model.</p>	<p>Lack of Philanthropic leaders at the table.</p> <p>Competing priorities for what the future of the Arts District looks like and who it serves.</p> <p>18b needs a new role focused on resource development and integrated into the future proposed BID.</p>	<p>Expand the leadership group to include more artist voices. Determine who the lead organization/person is to advocate for this District and is the partner with Artspace beyond the City's role.</p> <p>Arts District Implementation Strategies (Centro) simultaneously creating a board that can support this project and other creative space and support opportunities that is being integrated into the Downtown Master Plan and 18b.</p> <p>Establish a position (or expand the role of the Arts Dept. at the City) to include outreach and arts coordination. This position would be the bridge, leader, and network builder.</p> <p>Understand what leaders/organizations could be great partners when it comes to ground floor commercial spaces.</p> <p>Make a concerted connection to UNLV art grads and find new ways to connect them with the existing art scene and local opportunities.</p>	<p>In Colorado, Colorado Creative Industries under the Office of Economic Development and International Trade has the Colorado Change Leader Program. It teaches cultural and community leaders how to build support for community-led initiatives. This could be part of the Creative District funding bill that emerges.</p> <p>Pittsburgh Emerging Arts Leaders exists to provide networking, resources, and professional development opportunities to emerging arts managers and artists in the Pittsburgh area. This peer group is an entirely volunteer-run organization, spearheaded by a steering committee.</p> <p>In Salida, Colorado, The Creative District had very little visibility. Through the Artspace Feasibility Study, they added the Community Engagement and Special Events Coordinator Position within the City's Arts and Culture Department. Since starting in August 2022, the Salida Creative District has added monthly MeetUp's with growing attendance.</p>

CRITERIA	FINDING	CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATION	CASE STUDY
<p>Funding and Financing</p>	<p>The local community plays a significant role in the broader funding and fundraising effort, especially during the early steps of the process. In Vegas it will be crucial given the private-ownership of land.</p> <p>The resources and tools exist here to support an affordable housing project aligned with local goals that could be a demonstration project in an Arts District, but additional fact finding will need to take place in order to have more confidence.</p>	<p>Connecting with the philanthropic community.</p> <p>Scoring for LIHTC rewards lower per unit capital costs of affordable housing making it challenging to build quality live/work affordable housing without filling significant gaps in the capital stack.</p> <p>Small state, limited resources, more competitive.</p> <p>Newer philanthropy without longevity or deep roots.</p> <p>Resources have historically been focused on The Strip, and money intentionally stays on The Strip.</p>	<p>Connect Nevada Housing Coalition further to explore other ideas from nonprofit developers and legislation emerging statewide.</p> <p>Arts District has funding tools such as RDA, QCT, TIF and Future BID that would all be needed to make a project successful.</p>	<p>Colorado Creative Industries and the Space to Create Program are the best national examples of investment in the creative industries and affordable space.</p> <p>Another tourism-driven economy, New Orleans, has put together a fund for local artists to benefit from tourism dollars. The New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund is to support cultural industries and culture bearers of the City of New Orleans through partnerships, grants, and programs to advance sustainable tourism.</p> <p>2% Loan Program in Minneapolis is focused on small businesses, especially historically under-served ones and includes creative businesses.</p>
<p>Potential Sites</p>	<p>Vacant lots are a hurdle that is plaguing this area. “activate vacant lots” was a goal constantly repeated. Guiding the zoning, allowable uses and types of development in this area will be key.</p> <p>Likely a new construction project is most viable.</p> <p>A lot of great real estate is being held by landlords sitting on vacant spaces. Time to think about strategies to fix this.</p>	<p>Land speculation is increasing in intensity in and around downtown with owners holding onto spaces.</p> <p>Land costs are rapidly increasing.</p>	<p>The Business Improvement District (BID) can help solve some of the parking visibility issues. See the Grand Junction example.</p> <p>The immense amount of lots were surprising for a city the size of Las Vegas, prioritizing which ones to activate or purchase will be key in the future of the district.</p> <p>Lots of potential along East Fremont too.</p> <p>These lots provide a great deal of infill opportunities for smaller developments as well as larger, mixed-use office/housing projects.</p> <p>No specific site that works from those we visited, so this process may evolve.</p> <p>Continuing Nevada Housing Coalition conversations could be an opportunity for a collaboration with another nonprofit developer.</p>	<p>Grand Junction's Downtown Plan includes ideas on Shared Parking Agreements, better signage for available parking, parking apps that show available parking, parking management, utilizing parking technology, and considering creating a Downtown Parking District. A parking district defines an area to be managed holistically from a parking and transportation perspective and allows for shared parking.</p> <p>Chicago's Small Business Storefront Activation Program is an example of how arts and culture organizations are creating pop-ups in vacant spaces as part of an economic development grant.</p> <p>In St. Paul, MN, Grow Downtown is bringing new life to empty storefronts by hosting local businesses and boosting community engagement in public spaces through events, art installations, and activations, all while continuing to promote downtown Saint Paul. Grow Downtown hosts businesses in currently empty retail spaces across downtown St. Paul for six-month stretches of time with an open application on their website.</p>

Artspace greatly appreciates this opportunity to work in Las Vegas and learn from its residents and leaders. Artspace came away with a strong sense of the potential for an artist live/work mixed-use facility to be a successful venture and an asset to the community. Insights and recommendations in this report are solely intended to guide a project to the next phase of development and set Las Vegas on the path to becoming home to a new arts facility.

The next steps for Artspace will be to further investigate the sites, understand how they score for national and federal housing funds, and see where predevelopment support can be obtained. Artspace will also like to continue the conversation with the City Manager's office around site selection and continue to talk to potential partner organizations.



"The Mantis" by Kirk Jellum at Container Park // Photo Credit: Artspace

V. FURTHER RESOURCES

National Creative Economy Resources

The following are some national organizations that work in the field of economic development and the creative economy that Artspace Consulting knows well and may offer some inspiration:

- [Spaceworks](#) in Tacoma, Washington, started by offering business development support and securing vacant storefronts for small business promotion and limited business operations. It then helped those same businesses secure long-term leases. Eventually, it master-leased new permanent space for studios and small creative businesses. They oversaw the build-out and managed the space.
- [SFMade](#)'s successful locally-made branding effort supports small manufacturers in San Francisco. It seems like LocalWorks "Live Local" program could lend itself to creative efforts.
- [Forecast Public Art](#), a nonprofit in St. Paul, MN, works nationally and often in tandem with Artspace foster dynamic, inclusive, and resilient communities through public art, community-engaged design, and transformative placemaking.
- [Bridgeway Capital](#), a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) based in Western Pennsylvania, started a [Creative Business Accelerator \(CBA\)](#) in 2016 to support entrepreneurial artists, designers, makers, and craftspeople with building businesses that impact the regional economy in meaningful ways. The CBA empowers creative businesses to contribute more actively to equitable economic growth.
- [Springboard for the Arts](#) is an economic and community development organization for artists in Minnesota. They work to cultivate vibrant communities by connecting artists with the skills, information, and services they need to make a living and a life. They create simple, practical solutions and systems to support artists, such as healthcare, artist grants, resources, fiscal sponsorship, insurance, legal advice, job openings, and consultations.
- [40 West Arts District](#), the nonprofit in operation in Lakewood, Colorado, is a certified creative district supporting artists and economic development efforts and is a great example of a successful arts district that The Arts District can look for as a model.

Examples From Across The Nation

Las Vegas can use incentive programs and planning tools to seed more opportunities for creative space development. Some national examples of how communities have paved the way for private investment include:

- **Tax abatements for new development of creative space.** Kansas City provides property tax abatements for properties occupied by artists and arts activities in the Crossroad Arts District. Previously, tax abatements had gone to developers to attract new residents with high-end condominiums and lofts. However, rising property values and the threat of gentrification-led displacement prompted a re-focusing of the tax abatement program. Created in 2006 and renewed in 2017 for another 15 years. This Planned Industrial Expansion Authority (PIEA) program has successfully retained, attracted, and encouraged the kind of artistic activities that have helped the neighborhood thrive and grow.
- **Assistance with obtaining approvals within the Arts District.** [The Fredericksburg Arts and Cultural Commission](#), Fredericksburg, Virginia. The city provides arts and cultural businesses with a 100% reduction in planning, zoning, and special event and building permit application fees incurred in the initial establishment of a business, an expansion of a business in the district, or a new special event.
- **Enterprise Zones.** [Enterprise Zone program in Rhode Island](#). Companies in the Zone can receive tax credits to cover 50% of wages paid to newly hired employees if the new hires increase the company's employment by 5%. Additionally, business owners living in the Zone receive a \$50,000 deduction on personal income tax for three years. Tax credits are also available for low-interest loans to businesses located in the Zone.
- **Funding for capital improvements.** [Arts and Cultural District Micro Grant Program](#) in Richmond, Virginia. The City has partnered with CultureWorks, a nonprofit arts organization based in NYC, to administer two types of grants. One type of grant is provided to businesses, nonprofits, and individuals organizing an event, project,

program, or activity in the district; the other grant applies to capital improvements made to a site or building within the district.

- **Brokering of spaces.** [Spaceworks Tacoma](#) in Tacoma, Washington. A joint initiative of the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber launched the program in 2010 to activate empty storefronts with art and creative enterprise. Property owners donate vacant spaces for artists to transform with installations, short-term projects, pop-up retail, and events. Taking it a step further, they connected their small creative businesses and artists with local developers and building owners to help break down barriers between these sectors.
- **Adding live/work zoning language to housing plans.** Tacoma, Washington, has a [tip sheet](#) and some really clear language around setting up the zoning for this sort of district and why it is important. They also talk about Work/Live and Live/Work, which is a slightly different model.
- **Retail Challenge.** in **Red Wing, MN.** A contest that offers a prize valued at up to \$40,000 to support a business owner in opening a retail store in Red Wing's historic downtown business district. This program was created as a partnership between Red Wing Downtown Main Street, the Red Wing Port Authority, and the RedWing Housing & Redevelopment Authority.

APPENDIX A

PATH TO AN ARTSPACE PROJECT



A typical Artspace live/work project takes four to seven years to complete. Although no two projects are alike, they all travel a similar path through the development process.

Here is a brief look at a typical Artspace live/work project as it proceeds from inquiry to preliminary feasibility studies, predevelopment, development, to completion and then occupancy. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of every activity that goes into an Artspace project and is provided solely as the sample "path" a project might take.



(Clockwise From the Left Priscilla Fowler Fine Art Gallery and Vegas Theatre Company // Photo Credits: Artspace)

STEP 1: PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY VISIT I	
OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Gathering and Outreach
PRIMARY ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with artists, local funders, businesses, civic leaders, and other stakeholders • Conduct a public meeting to introduce Artspace and solicit community feedback • Tour candidate buildings and/or sites • Extend outreach as needed to ensure that people from underrepresented communities are included in the process
DELIVERABLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written report with recommendations for next steps
PREREQUISITES FOR MOVING FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated support from local leadership • Critical mass of artists and arts organizations with space needs • Established base of financial support
TIME FRAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-8 months

STEP 2: FEASIBILITY VISIT II	
OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing findings and advancing predevelopment
PRIMARY ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community meeting to share findings and recommendations from the first visit. • Solicit input on the proposed project concept. • Meet key staff at the state housing finance agency. • Review the Qualified Allocation Plan for Low Income Housing Tax Credits with key stakeholders. • Meetings with potential funders. • Deeper evaluation of proposed sites.
DELIVERABLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Pre-development agreement (if applicable)
PREREQUISITES FOR MOVING FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local leadership and creative sector support • Alignment with broader community goals • Funding resources for predevelopment • Available sites
TIME FRAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-6 months after Step 1

STEP 3: PREDEVELOPMENT I	
OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining Project Location and Size
PRIMARY ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with City and other stakeholders to establish (a) preliminary project scope and (b) space development program for evaluating building and site capacity • Further analyze candidate buildings/sites with respect to cost, availability, development program goals. • Review existing information about potential site(s) to identify key legal, environmental, physical, and financial issues affecting their suitability • Negotiate with property owners with goal of obtaining site control agreement • Continue outreach to artists and arts organizations • Connect with potential creative community partners and commercial tenants
DELIVERABLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of development space program and goals • Assessment of site suitability and identification of any contingent conditions to be resolved through continued due diligence • Site control agreement or update regarding status of site control negotiations • Summary of project status
PREREQUISITES FOR MOVING FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site control agreement with property owner • Growing stakeholder/leadership group • Both parties' agreement on project scope and feasibility
TIME FRAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-6 months
FEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$150,000

STEP 4: PREDEVELOPMENT II	
OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Design and Financial Modeling
PRIMARY ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish process for selecting architectural team • Confirm development goals and space program with architectural team • Engage architect to create conceptual plans and schematic designs • Engage contractor or cost consultant to provide pre-construction services • Resolve any contingent conditions relating to site control • Create capital and operating budgets • Obtain proposals and/or letters of interest from lender and equity investor financing partners • Prepare and submit Low Income Housing Tax Credit application • Submit other financing applications as applicable • Maintain excitement for the project within the creative community • Encourage and guide local artists to activate the site with arts activities
DELIVERABLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schematic designs • Financial pro-forma detailing capital and operating budgets • Preliminary proposals and letters of interest for project mortgage and equity financing • Summary of project status
PREREQUISITES FOR MOVING FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (first or second application) or commitment of alternative funding
TIME FRAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 months+
FEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$300,000

STEP 5: PREDEVELOPMENT III	
OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Tax Credits to Financial Closing
PRIMARY ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure final gap funding commitments • Raise funds for equity, including private sector philanthropic dollars • Complete construction documents and submit permit applications • Negotiate construction and permanent loan commitments • Negotiate limited partner equity investment commitments • Advance project to construction closing • Communicate the progress of the project to the creative community to keep up the involvement and excitement
DELIVERABLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful closing and commencement of construction
TIME FRAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 months
FEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$350,000+

STEP 6: CONSTRUCTION	
OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and Lease-up
PRIMARY ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee project construction • Engage property management company • Identify commercial tenants and sign lease agreements • Reach out to potential artist tenants, providing education on the application process • Conduct residential tenant selection process
DELIVERABLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed project ready for occupancy
TIME FRAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-10 months
FEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on project (not part of predevelopment contract)

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC MEETING ATTENDEES

We would like to thank the many community members who came out to hear about the potential for affordable artist spaces during our visit.

PUBLIC MEETING

Alexander Avila	Fawn Douglas	Pam Stuckey
Alexia Chen	Gabriela Rodriguez	Pasha Rafat
Alexis Quintanilla	Grace Da Roche	Patty Dominguez
Anastacio Del Real	Hector Lizaola	Rebekah Bernard
Ann-Marie Pereth	Holly Younglove	Robert Gurdison
Ashlie N. Randolph	Irma Varela	Robin Slonina
Barbara Strong-Valenta	James Walkenshaw	Ross Sperry
Beth McCall	Jasmine Freeman	Roy Thomas
Beth Sylvester	Jeff Lund	Ruth Dziadon
BobbieAnn Howell	Jennifer Kleven	Ruzo Logic
Brian Garth	Jerome Harry	Ryan Lee
Brian Paco Alvarez	Jim White	Sarah O'Connell
Cameron Grant	Jorge Lara	Scott Mayer
Carmen Beals	Josh Terry	Shannon Miller
Cherie Williams	Julie Navis	Shawndrea Manuel
CJW	Kim Johnson	Sherri Lewis
Corey Fagan	Kimberly Hutner	Steven Glisson
Cory Goble	Mai Zimbleman	Suzanne Logano
Craig Galati	Mary Jane Dorofachek	Suzy Martinez
Cucko Ulloa	Michael Paulino	Tara Shuttleworth
Daniel Roberts	Michele Lynn	Taylor Lockett
David Marure	Michelle Fuller	Tera Anderson
David Ryan	Michelle Graves	Torrey Russell
David Tagoe	Minjia Yan	Travis Jackson
Eduardo Tavares	Miriam Hickerson	Troy Heard
Elenis Wong	Monica Gresser	Tyson Wrensoh
Erica Kiewice	Nasko Balaktchiev	Vezun Vezun
Ernie Valdovinos	Norma McLee	

APPENDIX C

CREATIVE ASSETS LOCAL AND UNIQUE TO LAS VEGAS

As identified by participants in the Arts and Arts Organization Virtual Focus Group and Public Meeting:

1. A Public Fit Theatre Company
2. AREA15
3. **Arts District (x2)**
4. Believer Fest
5. Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art
6. Beverly Theater
7. Brewery Row
8. Broadway In The HOOD
9. Children's Festival
10. Chinese New Year Festival
11. **Clark County Library (x3)**
12. Cloud House
13. Django Vegas
14. Downtown Las Vegas Events Center
15. **Electric Daisy Carnival Las Vegas (x2)**
16. **First Friday (x19)**
17. Guerrilla Artz Factory
18. Gymcats
19. Heritage Tourism Festival
20. Las Vegas Art & Culture Summit
21. Las Vegas Artists Guild
22. **Las Vegas Book Festival (x2)**
23. Las Vegas Mariachi Festival
24. Left of Center Gallery
25. **Life is Beautiful Festival (x9)**
26. **Majestic Repertory Theater (x2)**
27. Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art
28. Market in the Alley
29. Masters Exhibition
30. Meow Wolf
31. **MLK Parade (x2)**
32. **Nevada Arts Council (x2)**
33. Nevada Ballet Theatre
34. **Nevada Humanities (x3)**
35. NuWu Art
36. Pirate Monkey Art
37. Psionic Art Works
38. Red Rock Paiute Gathering
39. Reggae in the Desert
40. The Mob Museum
41. The Neon museum
42. **The Smith Center (x2)**
43. ThirtyThree Gallery
44. University of Nevada Las Vegas Art
45. Utility Cabinet Painting Program
46. Vegas Theatre Company
47. Western Stage Props
48. Wiseguys Comedy

APPENDIX D

FINDINGS FROM THE ARTS ORGANIZATION/CREATIVE BUSINESS WORKSHOP AT THE LAS VEGAS 2ND ANNUAL ARTS & CULTURE SUMMIT

Artspace facilitated a workshop with arts organizations/creative businesses at the Historic 5th Street School on February 29, 2024. The purpose was to understand the space needs of arts organizations, creative businesses, and individual artists, including their current space situations, long and short-term space needs, and where spaces could be better utilized among the different arts disciplines in Las Vegas. Workshop participants were asked to fill out a short questionnaire and participate in an interactive exercise in addition to participating in the conversation.

The participants were a broad sampling of local businesses and organizations and ranged in their sizes, budgets, and locations. We heard from Las Vegas-Clark County Library System, Twyn Art Supply (a new group on social media connecting people who have or need art supplies), the Jazz Outreach Initiative, several theater and dance companies, 18b and a host of individual artists and other informal groups (see matrix on page xx).

The feedback suggested that affordability and space are critical to the participants and that event/flex/gallery/meeting space should be considered for inclusion in a mixed-use affordable arts facility. The financial feasibility of including non-residential space for local organizations and businesses should be explored by the development team. This input is not an exhaustive list of every space needed but serves as a starting point for future conversations about specific projects in the Arts District and elsewhere in the city. It was evident that these organizations/businesses/artists are looking for more opportunities to collaborate and are very open to sharing space wherever it is available.

CURRENT SPACE SITUATION

Eight organizations filled out the organization long-term space needs survey. Five of the eight indicated that the space they use **does not meet their needs**.

- 18b The Las Vegas Arts District
- **Culture Shock Las Vegas**
- InsideStyle
- Jazz Outreach Initiative
- **JBT Consulting**
- **Rainbow Company Youth Theatre**
- **Squishy Studio - Gallery to Go**
- **Vegas Theatre Company**

ORGANIZATION LOCATION

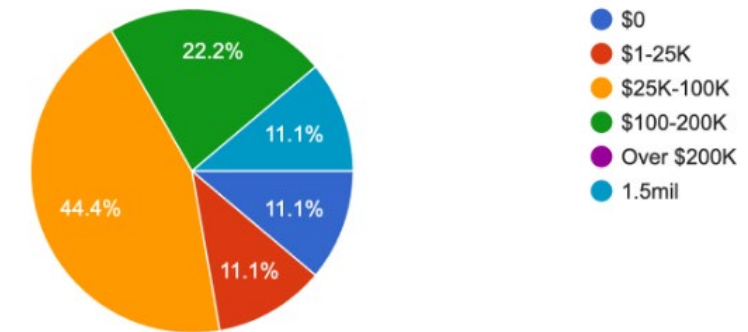
All of the attendees' businesses/organizations are currently located within the Greater Las Vegas area and most in Las Vegas proper.

INTEREST IN LONG-TERM FUTURE SPACE

Workshop attendees were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Questions are denoted by a "Q" and responses are summarized.

Q: What is your organization/business current budget?

9 responses



Q: "Does your space currently meet your needs?"*

- 22% said **Yes**
- 56% said **No**
- 22% said **Somewhat**

Q: "Do you have space to share?"

- 22% said **Yes**
- 67% said **No**
- 11% said **It Depends**

Q: "What types of space does your organization/business need?"*

- Performance/Theater Space - **5**
- Office/Meeting Workspace - **4**
- Storage Space - **4**
- Rehearsal/Dance Space - **3**
- Classroom Space - **2**
- Private Long-Term Studio Space (1 year or longer lease terms) - **2**
- Event/ Flex Short-Term Space (Pop-up) - **1**
- Gallery/Retail Space - **1**

*Interested organizations could select all applicable spaces

Q: “What are the future goals of your organization/business’ space-related needs?”*

- Secure a long-term commercial lease (one year or longer) - **2**
- Buy a building - **4**
- Expand your current facility - **3**
- Build a new facility - **3**
- Partner with another organization on space - **4**
- Other - **2**

**Interested organizations could select all applicable options*

Q: “What is the earliest your organization or business would consider leading new space”

Responses indicate a readiness to access new available space.

- Less than 2 years - **4**
- In 2-5 years - **2**
- In more than 5 years - **2**
- Not looking for space - **1**

Q: “What is your preferred neighborhood/area for your organization/creative business’ new space”*

- Northwest Las Vegas
- World Market Center
- **Central Las Vegas (x2)**
- **Arts District/18b (x3)**
- Downtown
- Greater Las Vegas area

These conversations are preliminary, and efforts should be made to keep organizations engaged in the process. The specific creative space questionnaire answers have been made available to the City of Las Vegas in a separate spreadsheet with contact information. They can be contacted if long-term space is available.

SPACE OPTIMIZATION EXERCISE FOR SHORT-TERM AND TEMPORARY SPACE

The purpose of this exercise was for the creative sector to know about and better use existing spaces in Las Vegas. This exercise was intended to connect the arts sector, figure out which spaces could be better utilized and by whom, and to uncover new spaces that attendees may not have known about. This focused on **short-term space needs** (usually rented either on a one-time or as-needed basis, for less than one year).

Artspace asked organizations that **have space to put a green post-it** on the board and those that **need space to affix an orange post-it** in the category that is most closely aligned with the following types of space:

- Artist-in-Residency
- Dance/Rehearsal
- Event/Flex Space
- Gallery/Retail
- Office/Meeting
- Other
- Short-Term Studios
- Storage
- Theater/Performance

Artspace then organized this information into an electronic [google spreadsheet](#) and on the following pages. This information is by no means an exhaustive list. It could become a living database and regularly updated by the City or designee.

LAS VEGAS SPACE OPTIMIZATION DATABASE			
TYPE OF SAPCE	ORGANIZATION WHO HAS IT OR WHO NEEDS IT	HAVE/NEED	NOTES ABOUT THE SPACE
Artist in Residency	Inside Style	HAVE	
	Winchester Cultural Center	HAVE	
	HacerHouse	NEED	
	Majestic Repertory Theatre	NEED	
Dance/Rehearsal	Huntridge Theater	HAVE	Will have in 2025
	Jazz Outreach Initiative	HAVE	
	Las Vegas-Clark County Library District	HAVE	
	Vegas Theatre Company	HAVE	
	Culture Shock Las Vegas	NEED	
Event/Flex Space	Chic Compass	HAVE	Area for food prep, multi-use, great sound system
	Historic Fifth Street School, Charleston Heights Arts Center, Mobile Stages (x2), Sammy Davis Jr. Festival Plaza	HAVE	
	Huntridge Theater	HAVE	
	Inside Style	HAVE	
	Jazz Outreach Initiative	HAVE	
	Las Vegas Clark County Library District	HAVE	
	Recycled Propaganda	HAVE	Art Classes
	Vegas Theater Company	HAVE	
	Culture Shock Las Vegas	NEED	
	HacerHouse	NEED	
	Raw Femme	NEED	
	Scrambled Eggs	NEED	
	The Mob Museum	NEED	For educational programming

LAS VEGAS SPACE OPTIMIZATION DATABASE			
TYPE OF SAPCE	ORGANIZATION WHO HAS IT OR WHO NEEDS IT	HAVE/NEED	NOTES ABOUT THE SPACE
Gallery/Retail	Huntridge Theater	HAVE	Will have in 2025
	Las Vegas-Clark County Library District	HAVE	
	Inside Style	HAVE	
	Recycled Propaganda	HAVE	
	Squishy Studio	HAVE	
	Winchester Cultural Center	HAVE	
	Gallery To Go	NEED	
	Majestic Repertory Theatre	NEED	
Scrambled Eggs/TWYN	NEED		
Office/Meeting	Jazz Outreach Initiative	HAVE	Will have in 2025
	Las Vegas-Clark County Library District	HAVE	
	LGA Architechture	HAVE	
	The Makerspace at Blackfire	HAVE	UNLC hosted Makerspace w/ discounts for local entrepreneurs
	Winchester Cultural Center	HAVE	
	Jeana Blackman Taylor	NEED	Meeting space for 10 people
	Majestic Repertory Theatre	NEED	Need space, currently none (paperwork, meetings, etc.)
	Raw Femme	NEED	
	The Mob Museum	NEED	Creative collaboration between filmmakers
	University of Nevada, Las Vegas Film	NEED	Production office space for managing student projects during shooting and post
Other	Made on Mars	NEED	Makerspace for large scale projects - must have A/C (welding, sculpting, carpentry, etc.)
	University of Nevada, Las Vegas Film	NEED	5,000 sq ft studio for students to build standing sets and shoot their projects

LAS VEGAS SPACE OPTIMIZATION DATABASE			
TYPE OF SAPCE	ORGANIZATION WHO HAS IT OR WHO NEEDS IT	HAVE/NEED	NOTES ABOUT THE SPACE
Short-Term Studios	Jazz Outreach Initiative	HAVE	
	Inside Style	HAVE	Artist Housing
	geez loisse	NEED	Woodshop Painting Area
	The Mob Museum	NEED	Sound proof studio rental
	Scrambled Eggs/TWYN	NEED	Artists Studios
Storage			
Storage	Jazz Outreach Initiative	HAVE	
	Made on Mars	HAVE	Space available to rent in North Las Vegas to hold medium sized art
	Culture Shock Las Vegas	NEED	
	Erika S.	NEED	
	geez loisse	NEED	Merch, storage, shipping prep area (close to South Vegas)
	Rainbow Company Youth Theatre	NEED	Charleston Heights Arts Center
	Recycled Propaganda	NEED	Art installation storage
	Take What You Need (TWYN)	NEED	Art supply redistribution
	The Mob Museum	NEED	Climate controlled storage for artifacts
	University of Nevada, Las Vegas Film	NEED	Storage space for sets, props, and costumes

LAS VEGAS SPACE OPTIMIZATION DATABASE			
TYPE OF SAPCE	ORGANIZATION WHO HAS IT OR WHO NEEDS IT	HAVE/NEED	NOTES ABOUT THE SPACE
Theater/ Performance	Chic Compass	HAVE	Great sound system and good acoustics
	Huntridge Theater	HAVE	Will have in 2025
	Jazz Outreach Initiative	HAVE	
	Las Vegas-Clark County Library District	HAVE	
	Las Vegas Theatre Company	HAVE	
	Winchester Cultural Center	HAVE	
	Bandit Booking	NEED	All ages music venue
	Culture Shock Las Vegas	NEED	
	Jeana Blackman Taylor	NEED	For new work development, staged readings, etc.
	Majestic Repertory Theatre	NEED	Currently using back room storage room as performance room
	Small theater companies (Majestic, Vegas Theatre)	NEED	Mid-sized union theater space

Overall and a bit atypical in most markets, the “Haves” outweighed the “Needs” in Las Vegas – 35 Haves and 30 Needs. This speaks to the many opportunities that are out there and need to be shared.

See [Space Optimization Spreadsheet](#) to find opportunities to “matchmake” with existing spaces. Update this spreadsheet regularly and have it posted somewhere with available space opportunities.