

## Objective 4: Downtown revitalization & entrepreneurship

*Encouraging downtown revitalization and entrepreneurship activity through a creative collaborative hub*

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### Context

Many communities face the challenge of downtown revitalization, especially those that thrived in the industrial and manufacturing era. Fortunately, Kenosha has experienced energy around downtown development as new businesses have opened from restaurants to live music performance spaces. A creative hub could capitalize on this momentum and utilize many of Kenosha's strengths, such as higher education institutions, a strong K-12 public school system, available downtown space, and a lower cost of living.

Kenosha is positioned well to establish a creative hub that will serve a dual purpose of revitalizing downtown and increasing entrepreneurial activity. The creative hub will benefit both entrepreneurs and the community. Some of its possible benefits include:

- Establishing a central hub where individuals can access entrepreneurial and professional development resources
- Creating a support network for entrepreneurs in the community
- Increasing the community's investment in and connection to downtown

Establishing a creative hub may face the challenge of interfacing with the many players already involved in downtown development. Identifying alignments and creating strong partnerships will be vital to this initiative.

### Key findings that led to this objective

- Comparable cultural plans highlight the importance of downtown development as well as coordination between public schools, institutions of higher education and other organizations (Phase I)
- Other current development plans in Kenosha focus ways to promote economic development and urban revitalization (Phase II)
- Interviews with current students and community members identified the importance of bringing more students downtown and tapping into the underutilized potential of college students (Phase III)
- Through economic analysis, Design was identified as a strong sector of growth and supplier of talent in Kenosha (Phase IV)

### Key Partnerships

- Kenosha Creative Space, Inc.
- Higher education institutions: Gateway Technical College, Carthage College, UW-Parkside
- Kenosha Unified School District
- Downtown Kenosha Inc.
- KABA/Y-Link
- WWBIC
- SCORE

### Examples of Creative/Arts Entrepreneur Programs

[Catapult Creative House, Missouri](#)

*“As less emphasis is placed on manufacturing, more emphasis can be placed on creating spaces that encourage a creative, innovative and entrepreneurial focus”*

*-Chrysler Development Plan*

*“A lot of younger entrepreneurial people are moving into the area, looking to grow their businesses, and become a part of the area”*

### Contact for this objective:

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## **KEY INITIATIVE I**

### **Establish a physical space for business and professional development for creatives**

#### **Outcomes**

- Create centralized, accessible location for entrepreneurship activities downtown
- Capitalize on identified opportunity of existing buildings and vacant spaces

#### **Action Steps**

- Establish Kenosha Creative Space as flagship entrepreneurship hub for creative occupations
- Compile list of entrepreneurial programming, resources, and services currently offered in Kenosha area
- Compile list of potential work and studio spaces available for lease or rent by artists and creatives

## **KEY INITIATIVE II**

### **Create sustainable funding model to support entrepreneur ventures**

#### **Outcomes**

- Enable Kenosha Creative Space to grow and take risks on entrepreneurs and ventures
- Promote idea that investing in downtown and the creative economy provides financial return and value for the community

#### **Actions**

- Assemble a team to research effective funding methods for creative hubs
- Develop and distribute materials on entrepreneurial resources to Kenosha banks and lending institutions

## **KEY INITIATIVE III**

### **Collaborate with educational institutions to launch programming**

#### **Outcomes**

- Increase collaboration between students, teachers, and administrations from higher educational institutions and KUSD
- Immerse Kenosha area students into the creative entrepreneurship process
- Attract students and other groups that don't normally frequent downtown to the area

#### **Actions**

- Utilize current entrepreneurship programs offered by higher educational institutions
- Identify strong and growing sectors in Kenosha that have demand for entrepreneurship and professional development programs, such as Design occupations (See Phase IV report)