

RESOLUTION No. 32, 2015

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
VALPARAISO, INDIANA, APPROVING THE CREATIVE DISTRICT PLAN**

WHEREAS, the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, by and through its Mayor, Common Council, Clerk-Treasurer, and City Staff (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "City"), is committed to fostering arts, culture and creativity, as they contribute to the life and character of the community; economically, socially, educationally; and

WHEREAS, consistent with the commitment of the ValpoNEXT Plan, adopted in 2014, the community identified the need for an arts district as one of 43 actions derived from the ValpoNEXT Plan. In August 2015, the City initiated a three-month community-driven visualization and planning process in order to prepare a plan for a new arts, culture and creativity district (hereinafter referred to as the CREATIVE District); and

WHEREAS, a Steering Committee was selected to facilitate the visualization and planning process; and

WHEREAS, during the course of the last three (3) months over four hundred and fifty (450) individuals/stakeholders have volunteered their time and efforts to the creative district plan; and

WHEREAS, during the course of the last three (3) months roughly 2,500 ideas, observations, suggestions and aspirations were collected to form the CREATIVE District Plan; and

WHEREAS, as a result of these efforts the CREATIVE District Plan was drafted. The Creative District Plan is hereby incorporated into this Resolution and attached as *Exhibit "A"*; and

WHEREAS, the CREATIVE District Plan contains three (3) initiative areas organizing thirty-four (34) actions consisting of projects, programs and policies that will advance the City and community; and

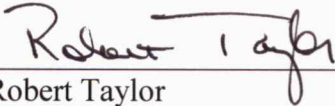
WHEREAS, the CREATIVE District Plan captures the aspirations and goals of a proud and forward-thinking City; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City has carefully reviewed and considered the CREATIVE District Plan and is desirous of adopting this Resolution in order to formally approve the Agenda; and

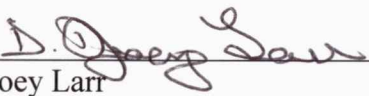
Whereas, the Plan Commission voted to recommend the approval of the Creative District Plan by a 8-0 vote on December 8th, 2015.

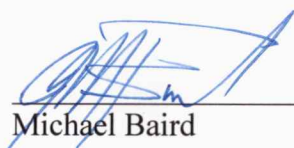
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, as follows:

1. The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, hereby approves the CREATIVE District Plan.

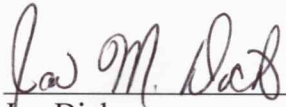

Robert Taylor

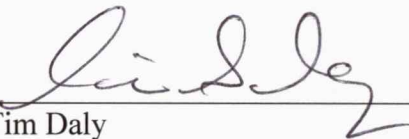

Trista Hudson

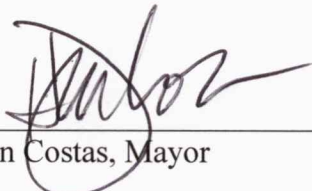

Joey Larr


Michael Baird


John Bowker

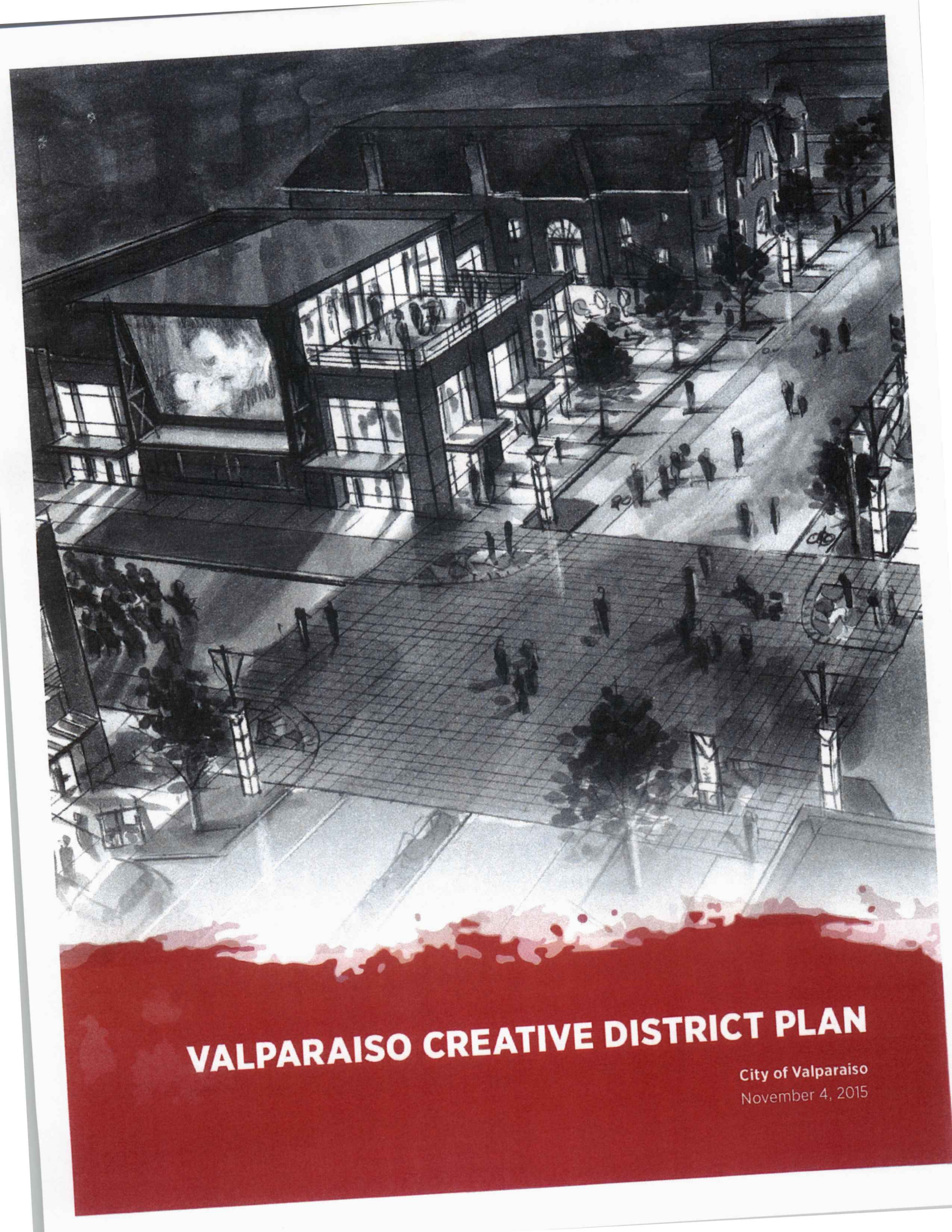

Jan Dick


Tim Daly


Jon Costas, Mayor

ATTEST:


Sharon Emerson Swihart, Clerk-Treasurer



VALPARAISO CREATIVE DISTRICT PLAN

City of Valparaiso
November 4, 2015

ABC COMPETITION CONTEXT

As a participant in the quarter-finalist round of the America's Best Community Competition, the city of Valparaiso chose to develop a Creative District Plan. This new district will be a place where the community comes together to create, explore, and celebrate arts, culture, and innovation. This district will help spur more downtown investment, be a geographical and organizational hub for arts and cultural offerings, and become a draw for creativity and innovation related to arts and culture in the region. This plan document outlines a vision for the district with 34 supporting actions organized into three organization themes.

For the purposes of the ABC Competition semi-finalist round, Valparaiso has strategically selected four actions which in concert establish a strong foundation for the new district. These actions would be undertaken during the 11-month implementation phase, as specified in the competition, to unite the community and lay the foundation of the future Creative District. This prioritization will allow the city to make considerable strides to be in the best position to dramatically advance the overall plan should Valparaiso be selected as one of the three grand prize winners.

VALPONEXT CONTEXT

The ValpoNEXT Citywide Vision Plan was adopted in mid-December 2014. It contains a broad range of strategies and action steps identified as priorities for Valparaiso to pursue over the coming decade. These strategies were generated by hundreds of community members who participated in numerous facilitator-led workshops and panels to envision the city's future. Establishing a Creative District was one of the ideas that emerged as an area to explore - which led to the in-depth discussions held this summer as part of the ABC Competition process. The development of the Creative District Plan is a combination of ValpoNext at work and the catalyst effect of the ABC Competition.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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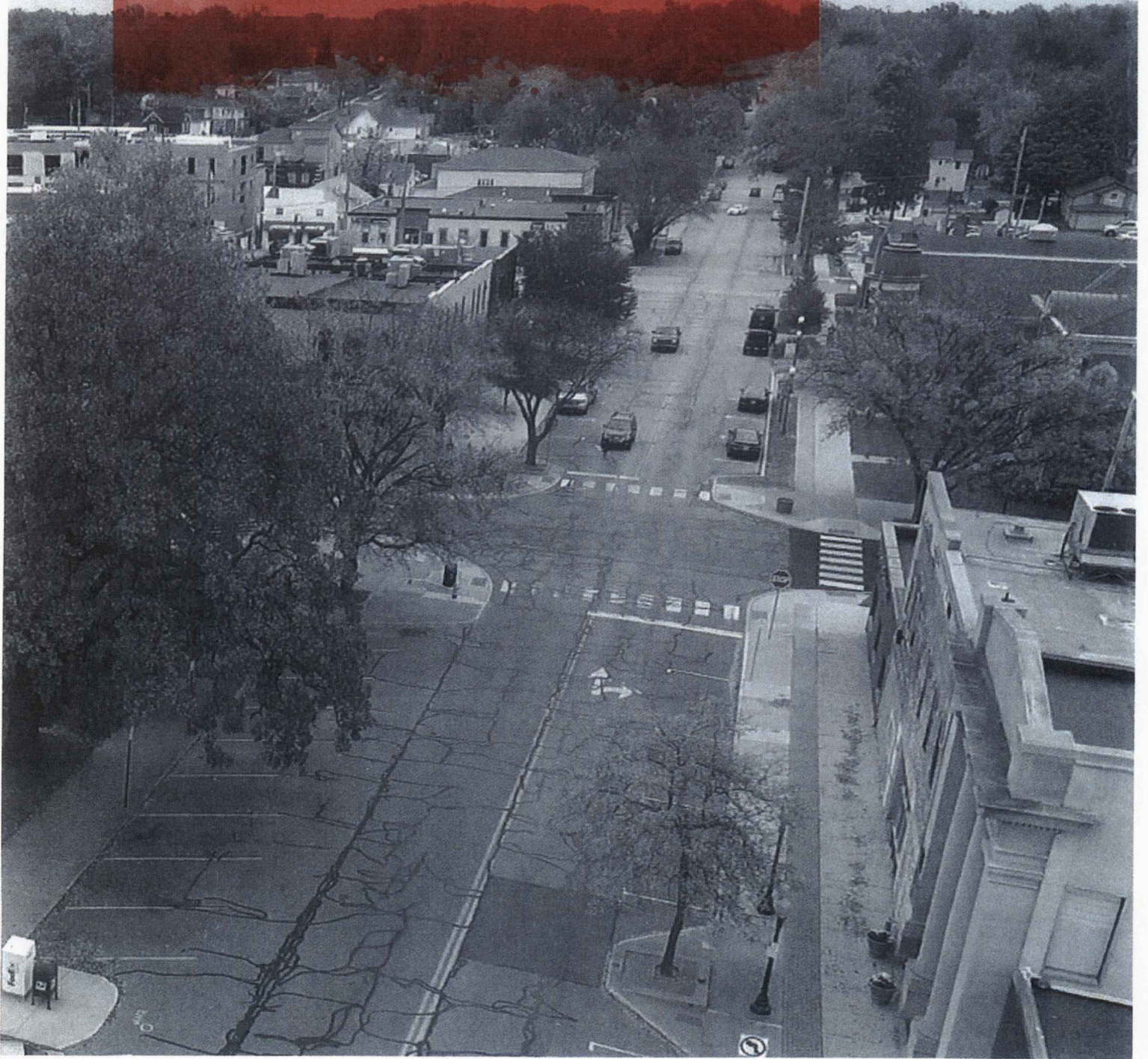
Bill Oeding, *City Administrator*

Rex Richards, *President, Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce*

Aimee Tomasek, *Art Department Chair, Valparaiso University*

A special thanks to the hundreds of community members who contributed their great ideas, enthusiastic input, and constructive feedback at every step in the process.

INTRODUCTION



OVERVIEW

What is a Creative District?

Arts and culture are key contributors to a community's quality of life and economic prosperity. Creating a special place for creative activity focusing on arts and culture will engage all ages and encourage economic activity in our downtown by attracting customers and additional businesses. Community partnerships will be forged among artists, government, business, customers, students and others. The district will maximize new technologies, such as digital media, to make our city even more dynamic, and will offer a place for all ages to gather, interact and find meaningful work.

Why a Creative District?

Attracting creative entrepreneurs of all types to Valparaiso will infuse energy, innovation, and further animate the greater downtown area which is not only good for the city but also the region. Creative Districts contain unique assets and are interesting places to visit, reside or own a business, which then boosts the economic and civic capital of a community.

What will the Creative District look like when it is realized?

The Valparaiso Creative District will be a hub of arts and culture in the community. Indiana Avenue will be transformed into a complete street with infrastructure for pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as amenities such as quality lighting, street furniture, free Wi-Fi, and public art. College students and the community will enjoy a safe and entertaining pedestrian connection between Valparaiso University and the Creative District as well as the greater downtown area. Artists will be better connected with each other and with the community through the newly formed Valparaiso Creative Council. The daily creative offerings - theatrical performances, museum exhibitions, artists' studio and gallery activities, arts and crafts classes, live music performances and interactive art installations - will promote the District and neighboring areas as unique destinations within the city. The community as a whole will be increasingly connected to the art and cultural offerings due to a new smart phone application which provides a one stop shop for information on all things creative going on in the district and the city as a whole. The district will begin to host new events such as the Valparaiso Festival of Creativity. This will be the place to be creative and be inspired within the community.

"In my own philanthropy and business endeavors, I have seen the critical role that the arts play in stimulating creativity and in developing vital communities... the arts have a crucial impact on our economy and are an important catalyst for learning, discovery, and achievement in our country."

—Paul G. Allen, Co-Founder, Microsoft

VISION

The following statement captures the vision for the future of the Creative District.

The Valparaíso Creative District... is a hub where the community comes together to create, explore, and celebrate art, culture and innovation.

ACTION AGENDA

Three initiative themes organize the 34 actions - projects, policies or programs - that will establish and help advance the Creative District. Each theme includes a statement that captures the key intent about that theme.

1. Create

Provide space, support and resources to assist artists and creators of all mediums in advancing their craft.

2. Explore

Promote the advancement of all forms of creativity through a variety of programming and opportunities to learn, teach and experiment.

3. Celebrate

Elevate arts and culture through increased visibility, communication and marketing of artists, events and activities.

PUBLIC PROCESS

This three-month planning process included five different public input opportunities including three large scale events, individual and small group interviews and online activities.

1 Arts and Culture Idea Open House

The kickoff event for the Creative District planning effort was an Arts and Culture Idea Open House which took place on August 13th at the Porter County Museum. The public was invited to drop in to learn more about the creative district planning process which had recently begun as part of the America's Best Communities Competition. Participants were asked to share their ideas about what they would like to see in Valparaiso related to arts and cultural facilities, programming and opportunities. The format for the open house was a variety of stations focused on the physical location of Indiana Avenue, a brainstorming station and a station where attendees could get their picture taken holding an "I love Valpo Arts and Culture" sign for a social media campaign.

2 Future of Arts Summit

There was great energy at the Urschel Pavilion on Wednesday, September 16th as over 120 people came together to learn, brainstorm and discuss the idea of a creative district in downtown Valparaiso. An introductory presentation shared highlights from the community assessment on the state of arts and culture in Valpo and a physical assessment of Indiana Avenue, the proposed location for the core district. During the last half of the event participants got to roll up their sleeves and share their ideas for the kinds of projects, programs or opportunities they see in a future creative district for Valparaiso.

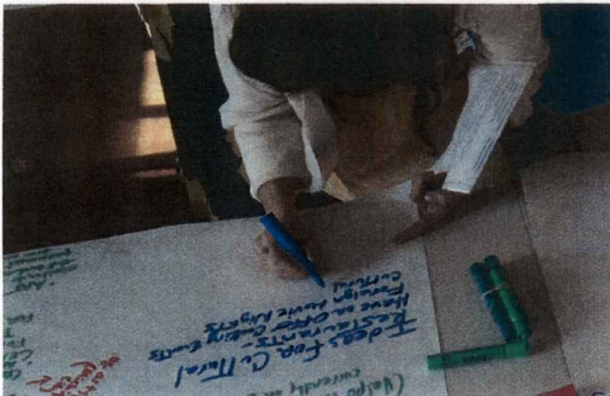
3 Creative District Plan Open House

it was a full house as the public was invited back together one last time for the Valparaiso Creative District Open House on October 14th from 6-8pm at City Hall. Participants were able to view the draft recommendations, vote for those projects which they thought should be a priority and give general feedback. There were also illustrations of how the core portion of Indiana Ave could be transformed into an exciting Creative District.



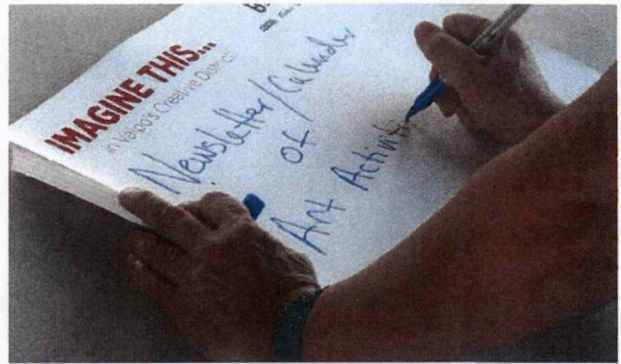
4 Stakeholder Interviews

Over 50 stakeholders were interviewed individually or in small groups to provide a better understanding of the state of arts and culture within the city. Through direct interviews, the team developed a solid understanding of the offerings, challenges and opportunities faced by the many individuals and organizations comprising Valparaiso's arts and culture community.



5 Online Engagement

There were two online engagement opportunities throughout the three-month process. The first was focused on idea generation and was launched after the Idea Open House in August. The second activity mirrored the engagement activities at the Future of Arts Summit which allowed people to rank the vision statement and supporting statements as well as provide specific ideas around the initiative areas: create, explore, celebrate.





"Great ideas and conversations!"

-Valparaiso Citizen



"I love the approach of incorporating the town's many voices."

-Valparaiso Citizen

ASSESSMENT

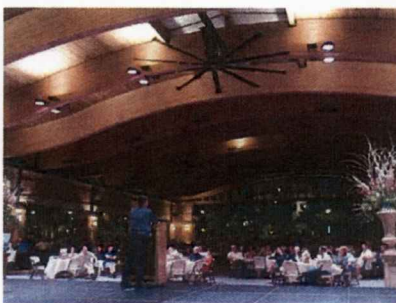
As a part of the planning process, two distinct assessments were conducted to provide 1) a better understanding of the geography of the proposed district location and 2) the existing arts and cultural offerings, organizations and opportunities in Valparaiso.

Physical Assessment

An on site assessment of Indiana Avenue and surrounding area to catalogue existing conditions, issues and opportunities was conducted. The physical assessment had several components including a photo inventory and mapping assessment which helped the team with the physical recommendations in the plan.

State of Arts and Culture

A number of components contributed to the understanding and documentation of the state of arts and culture in Valparaiso including stakeholder interviews, on site research, best practice precedent research and an inventory of existing arts and culture programming.



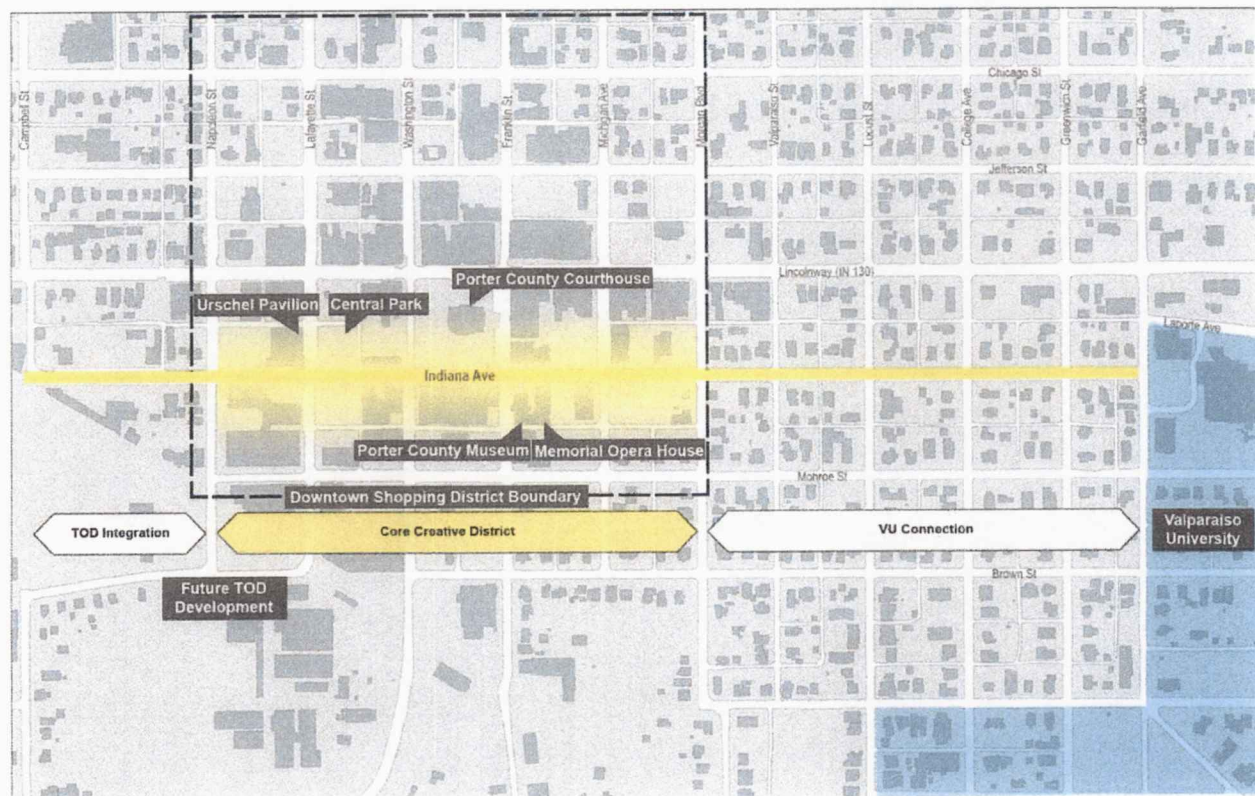
Assets along Indiana Avenue today

PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

Context

The location for the Creative District is situated one block south of Lincolnway (the main downtown retail and restaurant corridor) and between Valparaiso University and the city's proposed new Transit Oriented Development (TOD). The core district is a five block portion of Indiana between Napoleon Street and Morgan Boulevard. This area includes a critical mass of the existing cultural assets. (see map below)

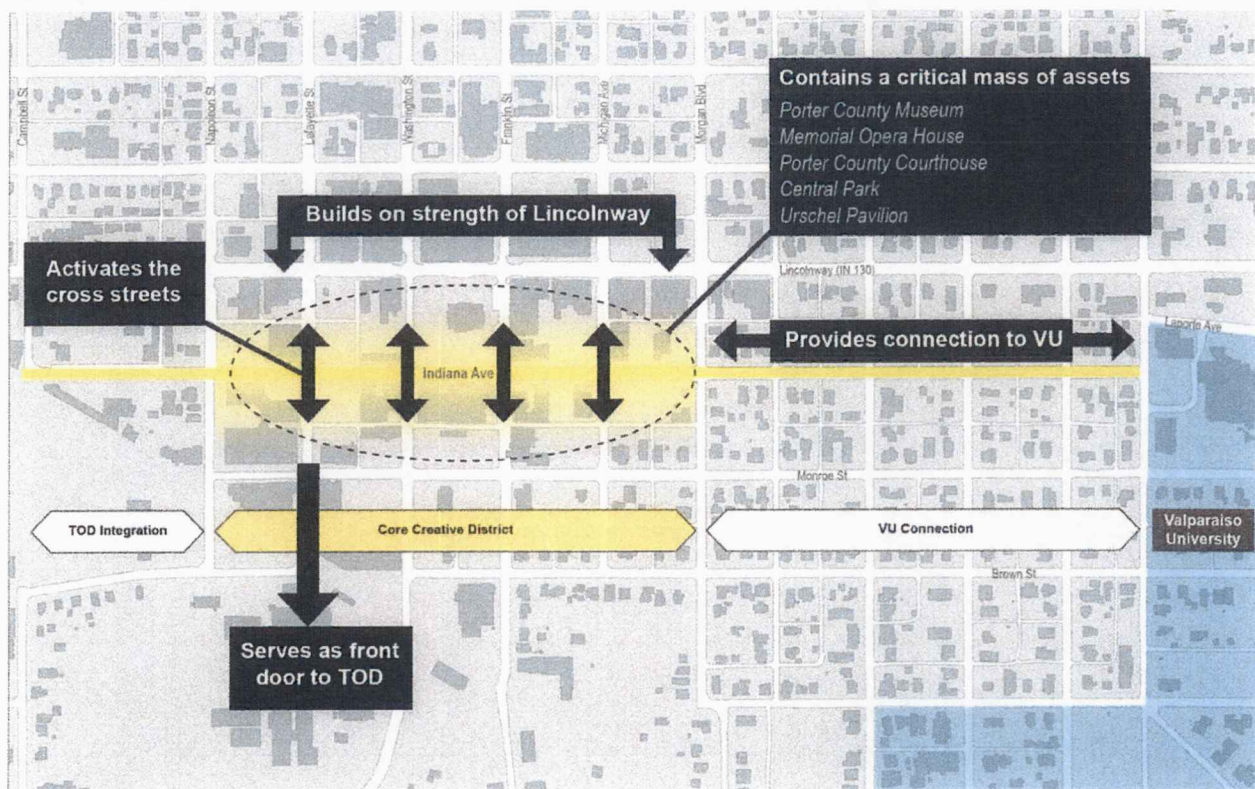
CONTEXT MAP



Why Indiana Avenue?

The Creative District location not only takes advantage of some of the existing cultural assets along Indiana Avenue but also allows for a better connection between Valparaiso University and the downtown area. Lincolnway is already a thriving main thoroughfare for the community, so by activating a parallel street there is more opportunity for the downtown to grow in the north-south direction. Also while Lincolnway is the main vehicular spine through the heart of the city, Indiana Avenue has the potential to serve as the main pedestrian and bicycle spine which connects the university to the downtown.

INDIANA AVENUE DIAGRAM



Ownership

An assessment of property ownership indicates a large portion of the core district is under government ownership. This is an important finding because 1) the city and county-owned parcels are historically more stable, and 2) the city and county-owned parcels present an opportunity for collaboration during implementation of the Creative District.

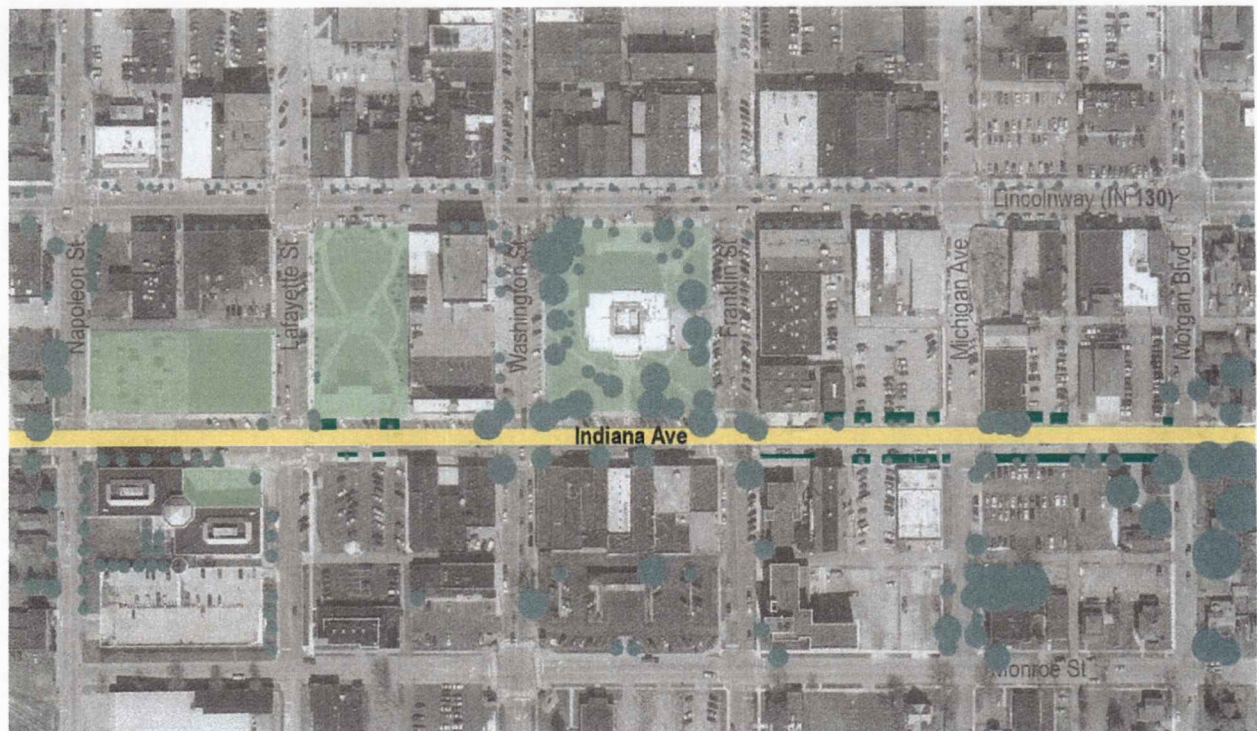
GOVERNMENT-OWNED LAND



Public Space

Significant public space exists along the length of the Indiana Avenue corridor. An assessment of the amount and quality of the space, including street tree coverage and tree lawn condition, identifies ample opportunity for enhancement of the public realm in the District. Further, there is a deficit of landscaping and public realm amenities such as benches, lighting, public art and signage. These inconsistencies and deficits present opportunities for the Creative District to significantly enhance the public realm along Indiana Avenue.

PUBLIC SPACE



Parking

An assessment of the amount and type of parking in the core district shows ample parking to service the district. With approximately 235 on-street parking spaces, 625 surface parking lot spaces and an additional 222 spaces in the garage at Lafayette and Monroe Street. There may be future opportunities to consolidate parking to allow for more infill development.

PARKING ASSETS



Public Realm Assessment

Several themes emerge from the assessment of the public realm along Indiana Avenue. Many opportunities exist along the corridor for public realm improvements to enhance the safety and experience of the district.



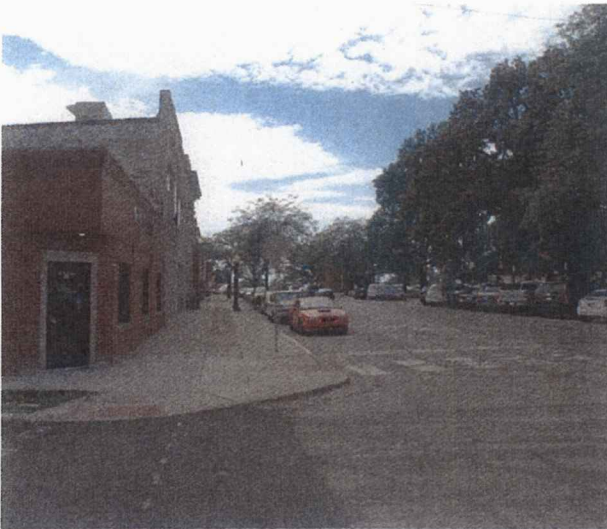
Tree Lawns

- Plant more trees for consistent coverage
- Create consistent bump-outs for pedestrian safety
- Screen parking lots with landscaping



Curbs

- Install public art, lighting and other amenities
- Create consistent bump-outs to delineate parking



Navigation

- Increase number and quality of crosswalks
- install bike lanes for safe bicycle accessibility
- Improve navigation of the corridor through signage and information kiosks



Sidewalks

- Improve sidewalk conditions to ensure safe and enjoyable access for all community members
- Upgrade and increase lighting for the corridor

STATE OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE

The state of arts and culture in Valparaíso has been assessed through stakeholder interviews, small group meetings and on-site research. The findings are organized into three sections; an inventory of assets, highlights of what we learned, and a list of opportunities and strengths.

INVENTORY OF ASSETS

Venues

A variety of indoor and outdoor venues ranging from small to medium audience capacity.

Performance Art

A wide range of professional, community and collegiate productions offered year round.

Public Events

Several signature festivals and performance events, but overall limited focus on professional artisans.

Museums

PoCo Muse expanding, Brauer Museum considered world class with frequent programming.

Culinary and Retail

A unique mix of boutiques and salons, as well as an acclaimed roster of downtown restaurants.

Public Art Installations

Primary focus on Art Walk and VU campus installations with minimal offerings in the downtown area.

Galleries

Several key closures over the last 18 months, extremely limited selection of true gallery experiences.



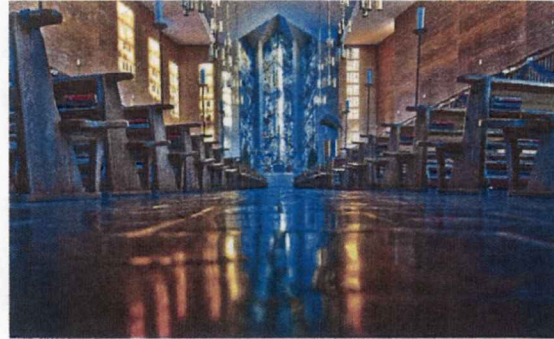
What we learned

Several themes emerged from the stakeholder meetings with specific opportunities for leveraging current assets to create an even more robust arts and culture scene in Valparaiso.



Visual Arts

More public art installations needed downtown. A signature style would help direct long-term curation and attract target audiences.



University-City Connection

Need greater student engagement off-campus, public engagement on-campus, and sharing of resources/talents. Also need a safe walking corridor to the downtown, tailored communications and more diverse programming.



Physical Improvements

The future Creative District requires numerous functional upgrades with an eye to the aesthetic, including design of parking, navigation, sidewalks, lighting, seating and landscaping.



Education

Strong desire for more primary and secondary education ties to the community's arts and culture assets. Professional and hobbyist artists seek continuing education options.



Space

A void exists in artist studios, live/work spaces and other creative spaces. Community desires spaces for workshops, recitals, meetings, and exhibitions (Center for Creativity).



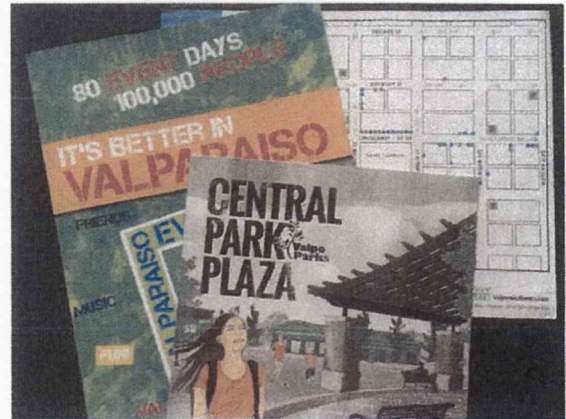
Programming

Need greater diversity of programming to reach broader audience - particularly VU student population. Need greater art influence in key events such as the World Cultural Festival.



Communications

Arts and culture community would greatly benefit from centralized communication channels and unified networks to link artists to artists, and community to resources (i.e., Creative Council).



Marketing

City needs an online arts portal - a comprehensive calendar of offerings, directory of contacts and source of arts news to nurture flow of information to VU, community and region.

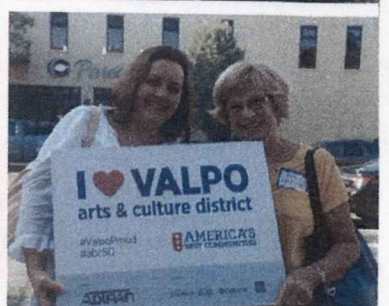
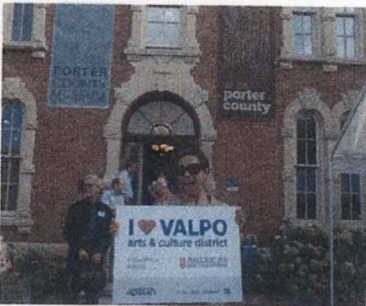
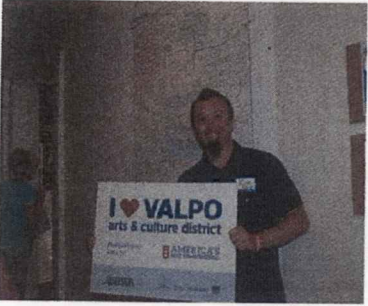
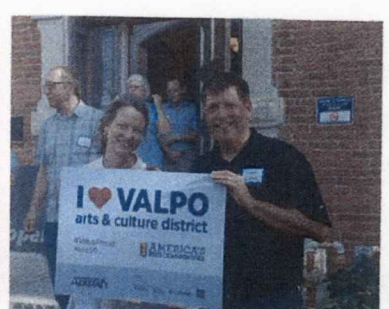
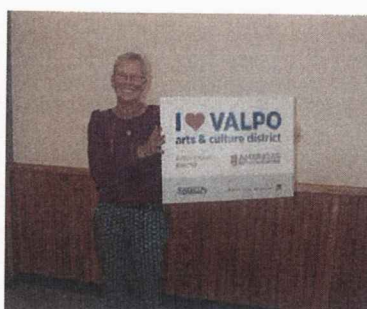
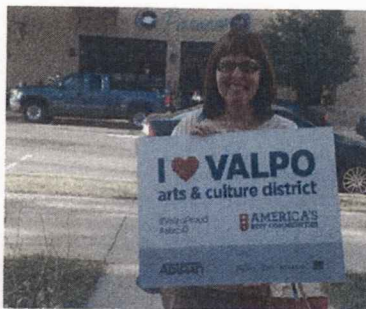
A summary of Valparaíso's arts-related strengths is listed to the right. The strengths provide a launch pad for opportunities to improve the city's overall arts assets.

Strengths

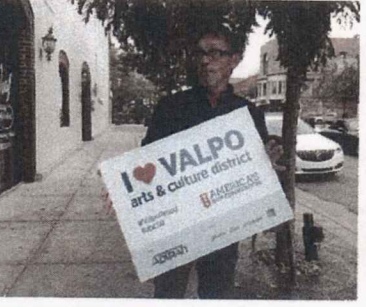
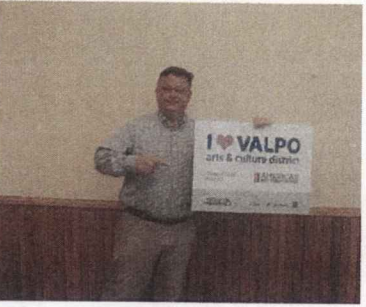
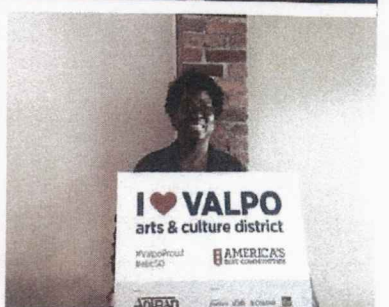
- Performance Venues
- Performance Art
- Museums
- Culinary Arts
- Retail
- Emphasis on Education

Opportunities

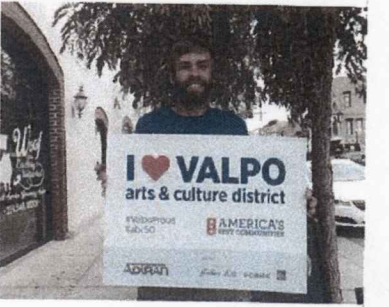
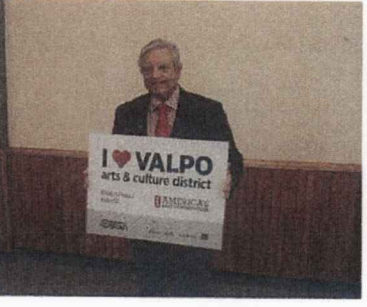
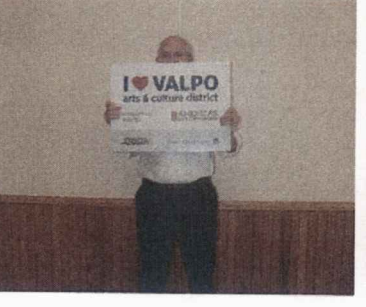
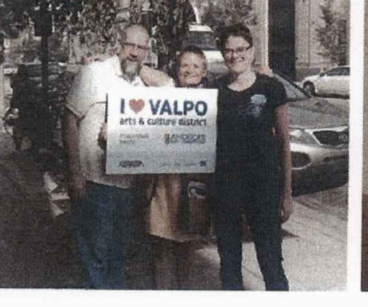
- Arts-Related Spaces
- Distributed Offerings
- Centralized Critical Mass
- Public Art Installations
- Valparaíso Creative Council
- Online Arts Portal



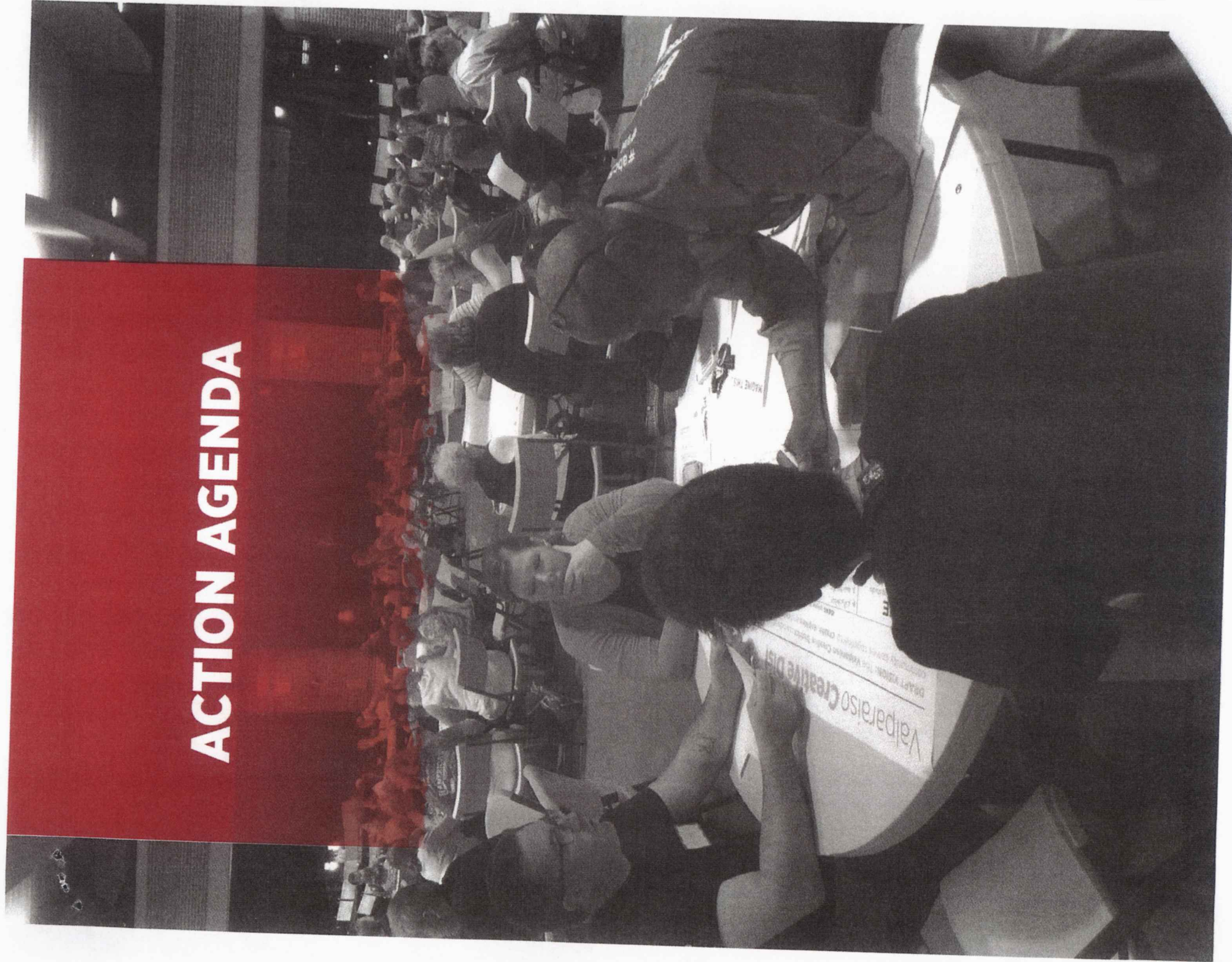
"I would love to see artists and arts-related businesses working together to tell the world about the offerings of Valparaiso."



"Having public art throughout the district is crucial."



ACTION AGENDA





CREATE

To provide space, support and resources to assist artists and creators of all mediums in advancing their craft.

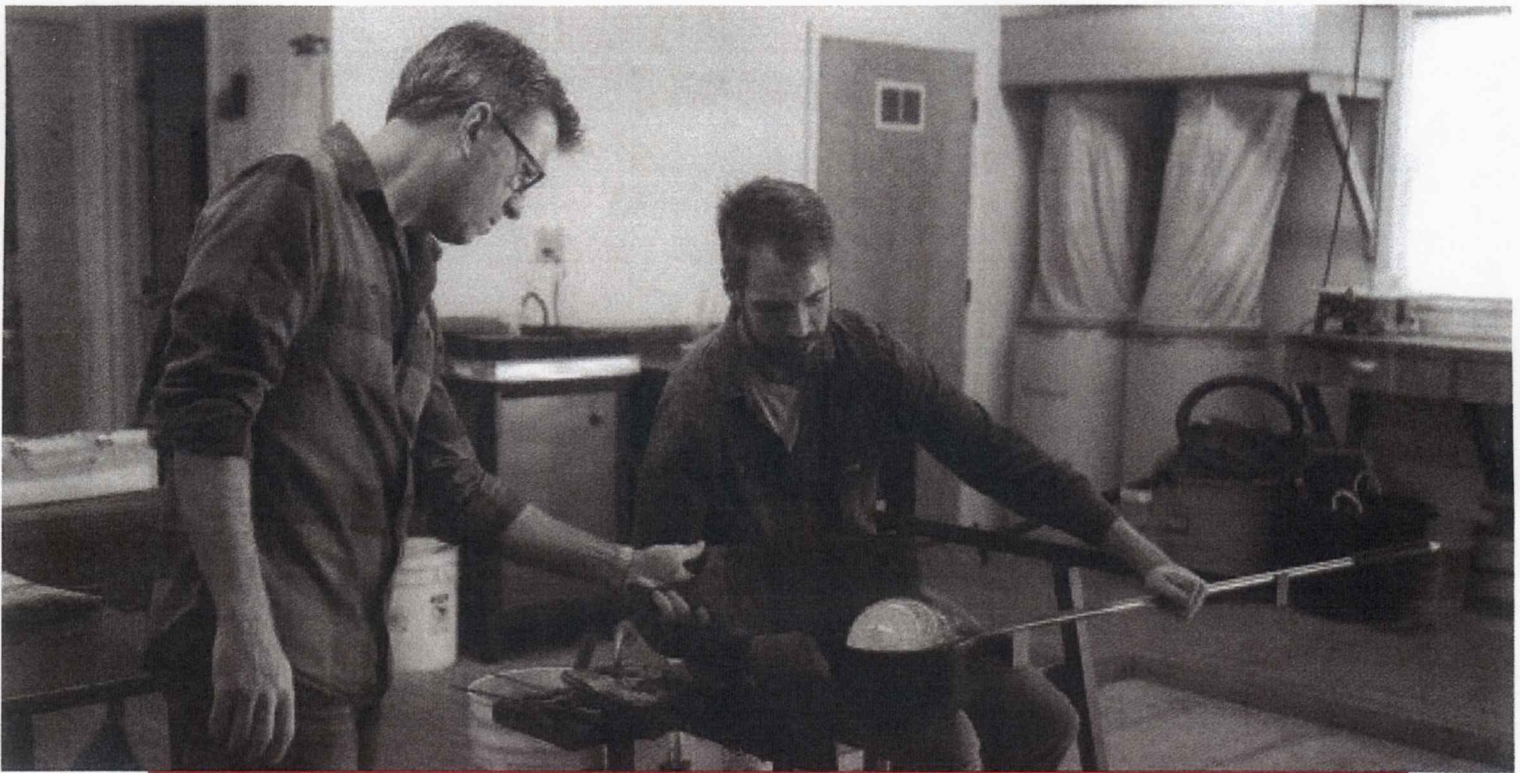
1a Build a Center for Creativity on Indiana Avenue.

A new downtown facility focused on arts and culture should be built to increase the options for live music and small venue performances in addition to flexible gathering space for classes, community meetings and other events for the city in downtown. This facility should fill the existing void in the type and design of performance and gathering space in the downtown area rather than compete with established venues.

1b Explore idea of developing a “makerspace.” The city should explore a new type of creative arts space focused on the makers movement including both traditional hands-on making and digital fabrication. A “makerspace” offers the public access to tools, resources and educational classes related to the art of making. This space could work well in an adaptive reuse of an existing warehouse or larger scale building.

1c Develop an artist residency program. The community should increase the exchange of ideas with artists from other places through the creation of an artist residency program. This would not only increase visibility of Valparaiso's creative assets and talent to the larger arts ecosystem nationally and internationally, but also bring new talent and ideas to Valparaiso.

1d Develop a student internship program between Valparaiso University and local artists/ art-focused businesses. A program should be developed to more deliberately connect Valparaiso University students studying in the fields of fine and performance art, as well as related majors including engineering and technology, to the larger community of artists and art-related businesses.



“Valpo needs a makerspace... a place for artists to create their crafts.”

- local artisan

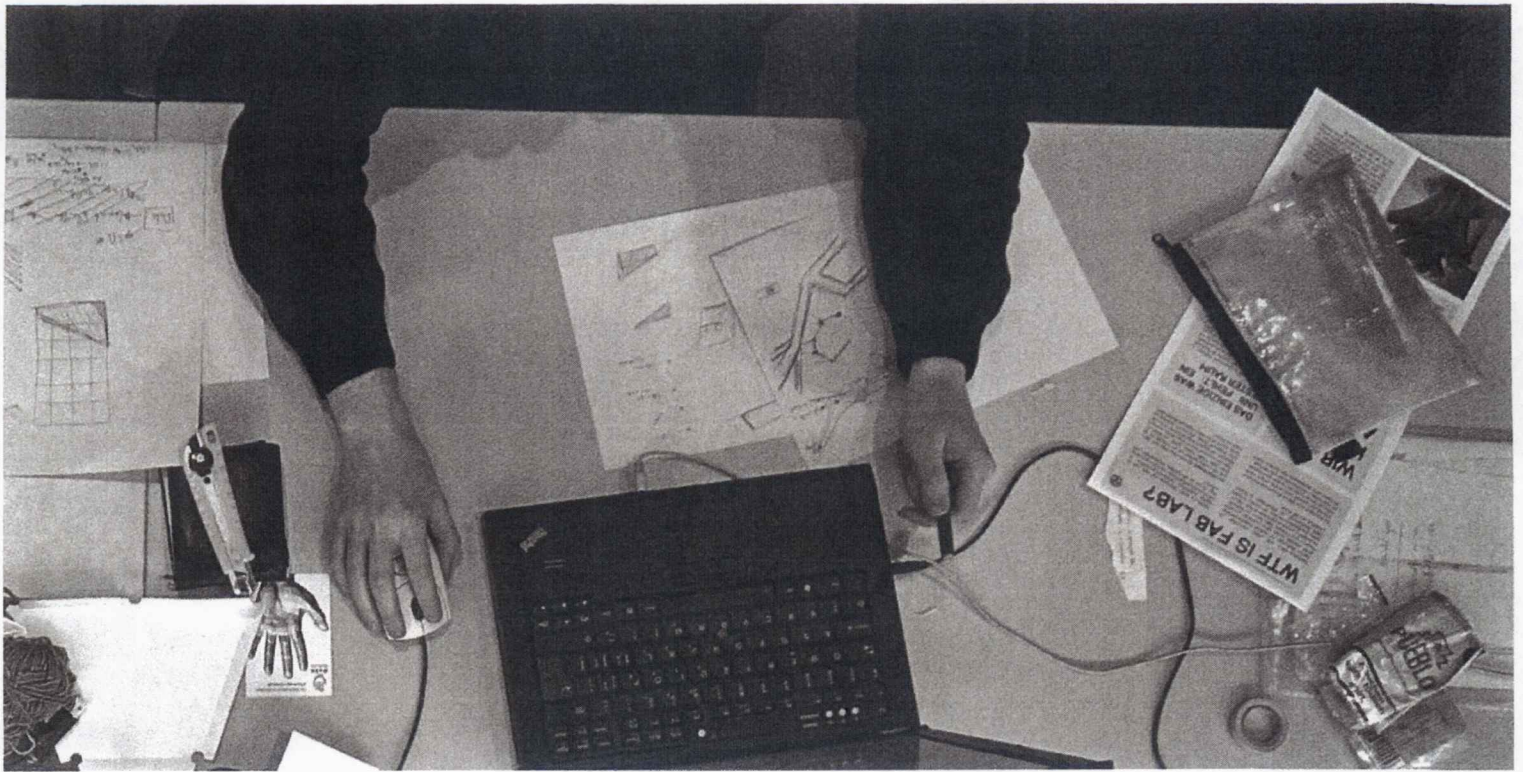
- 1e Expand programming of current downtown market.** The current programming and schedule of the downtown market should be evaluated so that the market offerings play to Valparaiso's strengths and don't directly compete with the surrounding communities markets.
- 1f Develop artist live/work spaces.** The city should look for opportunities to support or partner on development or redevelopment projects which would offer affordable artist live/work spaces located within or nearby the Creative District.
- 1g Explore opportunities to adapt/reuse existing buildings along Indiana Avenue (in the 5 block core) for creative spaces.** The city should evaluate current building uses and vacant properties (in the core 5 block district) for potential sites to expand creative offerings including galleries, studios, and small scale performance venues).
- 1h Designate funding for arts and creativity projects and programs.** The city should work with other entities such as the redevelopment commission to earmark certain funds for creative focused development, renovation and installations within the Creative District.



EXPLORE

To promote the advancement of all forms of creativity through a variety of programming and opportunities to learn, teach and experiment.

- 2a Create a smart device application that summarizes all events going on in the community.** A smart device application would allow a one-stop-shop tool for distributing information about arts and culture offerings in the city. It could also host digital or interactive aspects of activities within the Creative District which could expand the reach of the district beyond its physical location.
- 2b Install free district-wide WiFi.** The installation of free WiFi within the district would provide an added dimension to the public space and create the opportunity for more interactivity with galleries, public art pieces and other creative aspects of the district. By allowing the public to join in through a special portal, the activities and behaviors of the people in the district can be analyzed and mapped and used to provide information that can better shape the user experience in the district.
- 2c Create interactive art and engagement installations.** The public art, installations and other features of the district should be interactive and engaging with a focus on the utilization of technology (e.g. a digital art gallery could feature a rotation of renowned works of art so people in another part of the world could see local art from Valparaiso and vice versa, or smart devices could allow the public to program a downtown music experience).
- 2d Create a Valparaiso Theater Festival.** The city, working with all the local performance-art venues and organizations, should create a new theater event which would showcase and elevate the strong performance-art base already present in Valparaiso, and draw regional and national shows and tourists.
- 2e Implement a robust public art program for Indiana Avenue.** A public art program focused on Indiana Avenue with ancillary installations along Lincolnway and side streets should be established (e.g. Create a 360-degree sculpture park around Courthouse). The first step would be to create a public art master plan for Indiana Avenue and the greater downtown area.
- 2f Build an art playground.** The city should create a public space specifically focused on youth with the emphasis on art. An emphasis should be placed on getting children to interact within the district.
- 2g Develop a digital/interactive historic tour of downtown Valparaiso (including architecture, memorials, sites, etc.)** Valparaiso has many great historical and cultural assets within the downtown area which should be better displayed, showcased and celebrated. A digital/interactive downtown tour would allow people to use technology to learn about the past.



2i

2j

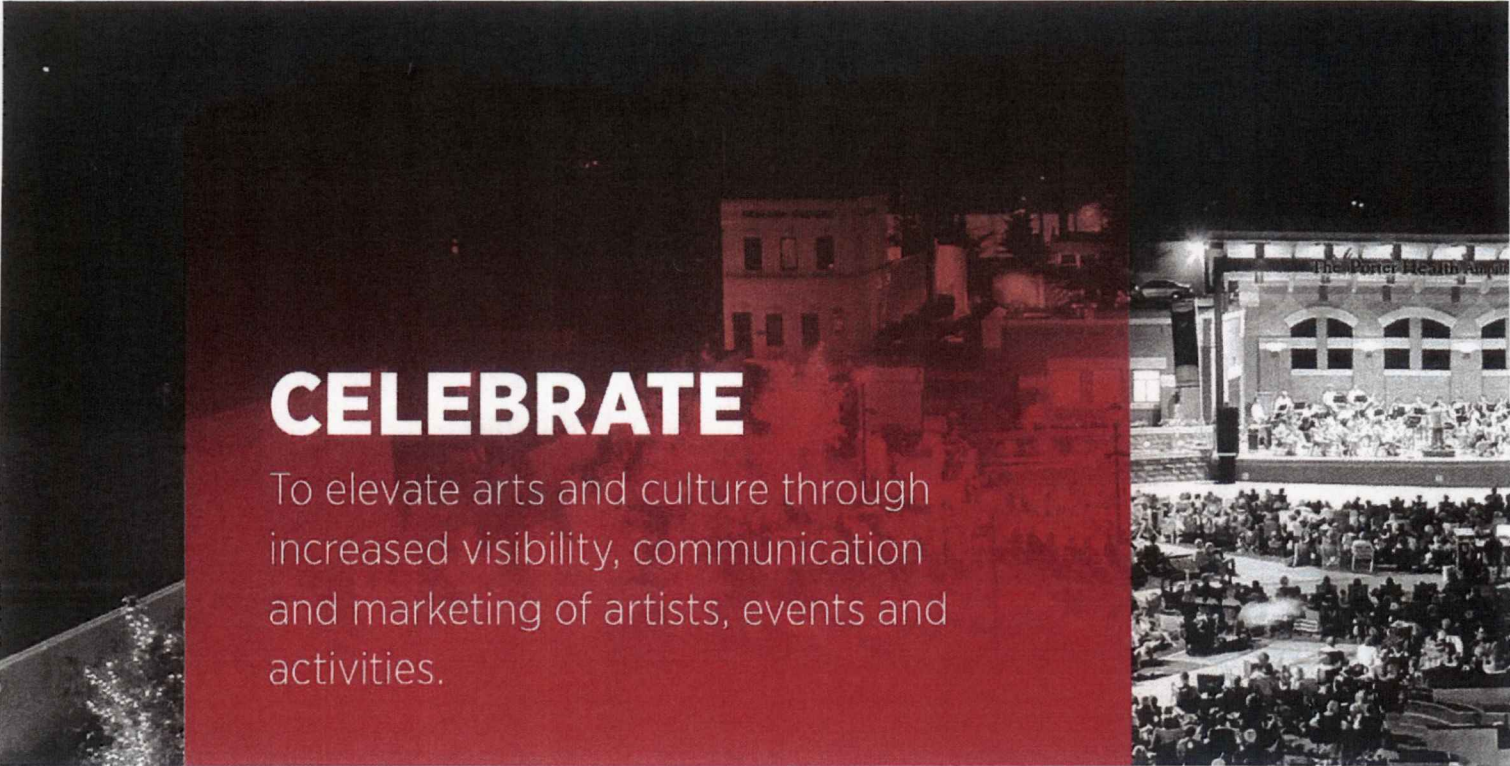
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2m

"We're introducing edgier works that speak to a broad range of audiences, including younger Valparaisians."

- local performance-art administrator



CELEBRATE

To elevate arts and culture through increased visibility, communication and marketing of artists, events and activities.

- 3a Establish a “Creative Council” to advance arts, culture and creativity across the community.** A Creative Council would serve as an advocate for the Creative District and the creative community as a whole. This council would provide support for all artists as well as creative organizations, institutions and businesses in the city. The council should have a paid coordinator position supported by volunteer committees to advance the mission of the district.
- 3b Institute strong arts-related communications with Valparaiso University student body.** The University and city should work together to better promote VU productions and artistic offerings as well as community-wide events to the student body.
- 3c Create, maintain and publicize a comprehensive arts, culture and creativity assets inventory.** A comprehensive inventory of creative assets should be created and maintained by the Creative Council. This resource would help the city attract more regional, state and nationwide events, shows and exhibitions.
- 3d Introduce a Valparaiso Creative Portal.** This one-stop-shop web portal would allow artists, residents and visitors an easy place to obtain information about current and upcoming shows, exhibitions and events focused on the arts within the district and throughout the broader Valparaiso community.
- 3e Expand current culinary arts activities and events.** Valparaiso currently enjoys a strong culinary reputation in the region with strong downtown restaurants, and the city should create more culinary focused events and activities such as a “Taste of Valpo” event, or expand the number of food trucks and then couple with arts and creativity activities/events like a monthly pop up craft and food fair.
- 3f Create events that showcase Valparaiso University to the larger community.** A “showcase of Valparaiso University” event focused on performance art, music etc. would help to better connect the talent of the university to the larger community. This event could be annual and take place in venues within the creative district.
- 3g Institute an emerging artists program.** A new program should be created that would support emerging artists. It would help Valparaiso build a reputation as a welcoming place for startup creative businesses and artists just beginning their careers.
- 3h Brand Indiana Avenue.** As part of the Creative District, Indiana Avenue will become a signature street within the community and should be branded as such. Branding should include a unique name, messaging and repositioning including graphics.



3i **Expand World Culture Festival.** Valparaiso is home to the Valparaiso International Center's World Culture Festival, which features food, music and entertainment that celebrates the cultural diversity of northwest Indiana. The city should expand this event to include more arts and creativity elements and should work to increase promotion and attendance at the event.

3j **Explore regional collaboration opportunities.** Valparaiso should collaborate with other cities in the region (namely Michigan City and Chesterton) to create a regional strategy for creative tourism.

3k **Promote full arts, culture and creative offerings in all city-wide communication channels.** The city, Valparaiso Events, Valparaiso University and other key organizations should work to promote all arts and creative offerings in all primary communication channels available within the city. This action should be a key responsibility of the "Creative Council", action 3a.

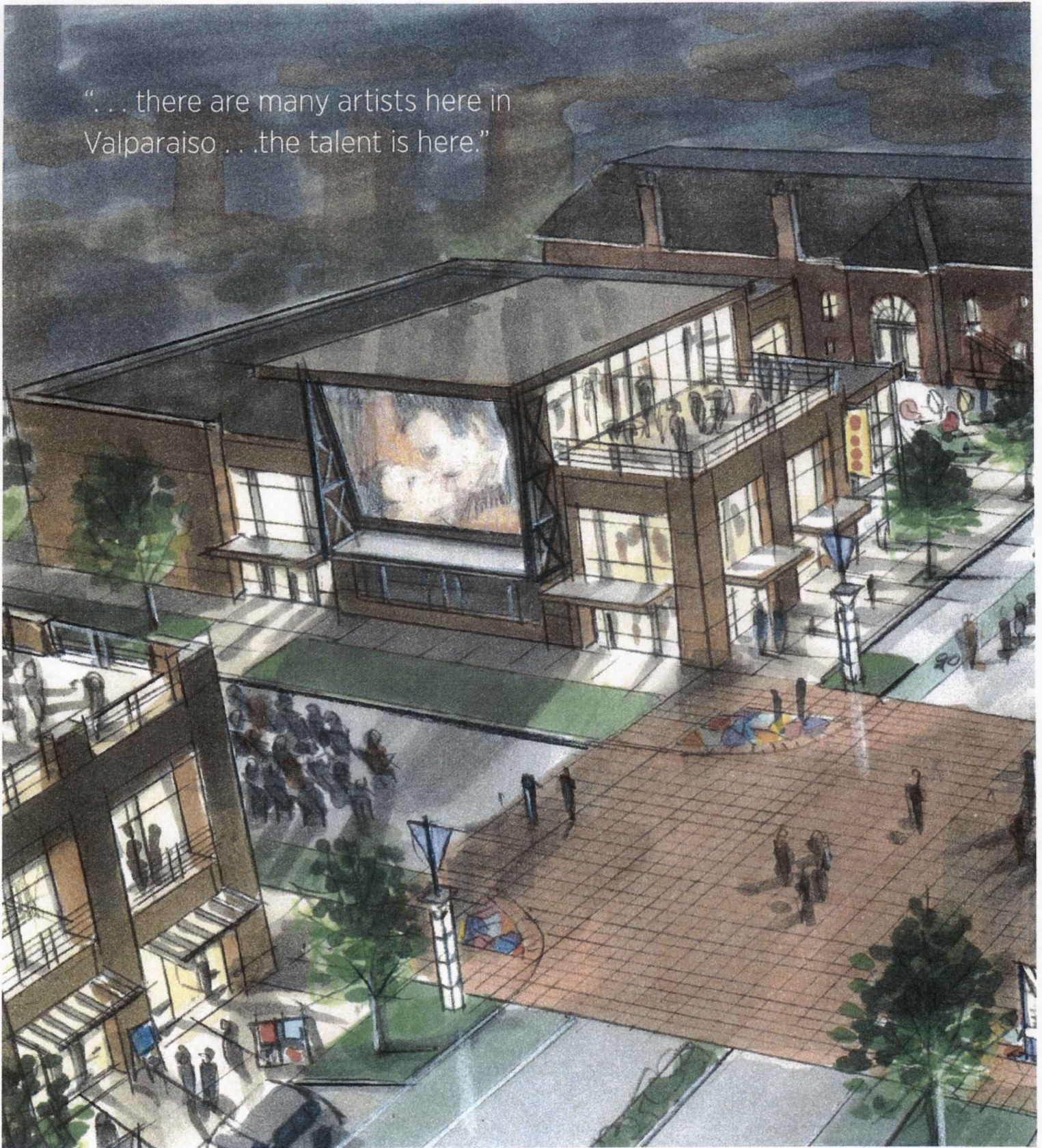
3l **Update streetscape along Indiana Avenue.** The streetscape along the entirety of Indiana Avenue should be improved through public realm and infrastructure upgrades. Upgrades should include better sidewalks, lighting, street furniture and amenities, information kiosks, public art and landscaping.

3m **Organize an annual Festival of Creativity.** An annual pop-up festival located in the creative district showcasing the entire arts, cultural and creative community within the city should be developed. This event would celebrate all the creative assets as well as share progress and status of implementation of the Creative District plan to the larger community.

"Our goal is to attract people downtown to celebrate the arts... concert series, interactive walks, outside artists, programming... constantly finding new, exciting options."

- local arts educator

“... there are many artists here in Valparaiso ...the talent is here.”



Imagine... Indiana Avenue

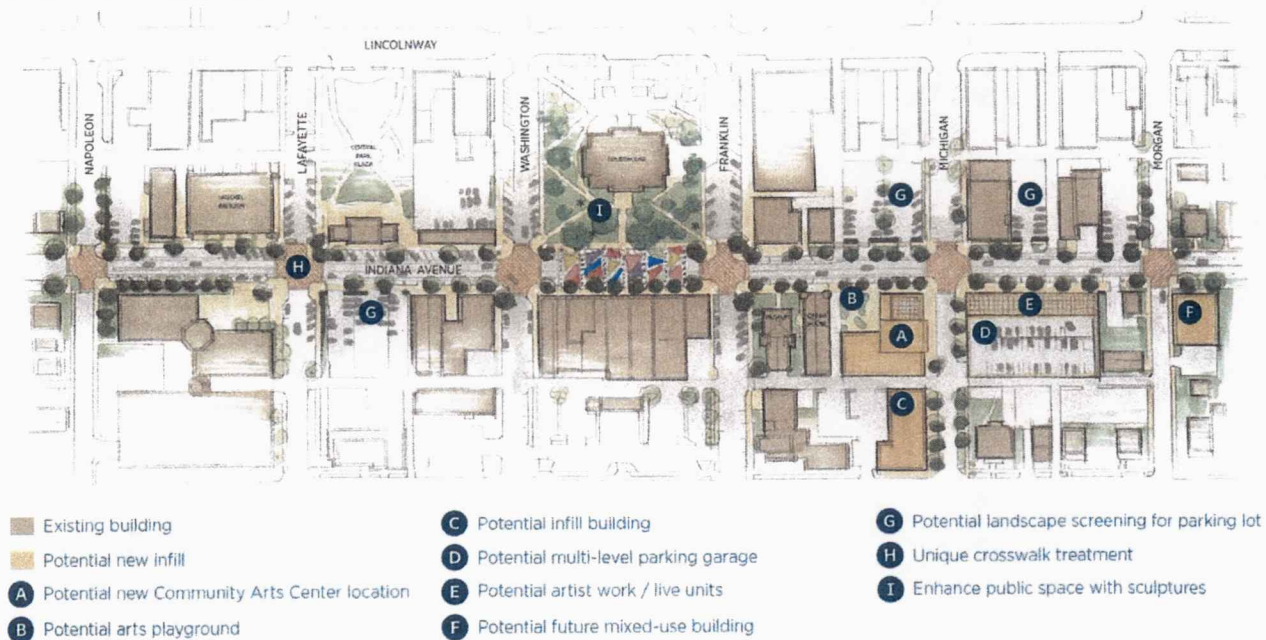
This image is for illustrative purposes only. The suggested infill buildings and streetscape upgrades are diagrammatic only. They are meant to represent a potential build out, not an approved city plan for this area or street.



Indiana Avenue at Locust Street (looking east)



Site Plan Illustration



**These images are for illustrative purposes only. The suggested infill buildings and streetscape upgrades are diagrammatic only. They are meant to represent a potential build out, not an approved city plan for this area or street.*