



CITY OF
FREMONT
NEBRASKA

CREATIVE DISTRICT PLANNING

Develop a Foundation of Governance

Champion the Concept

Educate and Unite



Vision Fusion
Facilitation and Consulting

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ACTIVE DATES

The Fremont Creative District Strategic Plan covers a 5-year Focused Implementation period from April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2028. The Plan also includes a 10-year Practical Vision. As the district develops, the 10-year Practical Vision will be reshaped into Focused goals to be implemented.

FREMONT
Here We Grow

COMMUNITY

Seven land speculators claimed the town site of Fremont on August 23, 1856 with a vision that this piece of prairie would develop into a major rail center on the Union Pacific transcontinental railroad. The downtown commercial center and residential areas developed, hotels were abundant and by 1906, three broad-based manufacturing industries — foundries, factories, saw mills — grew along the rail lines. Raw materials were shipped out and Fremont began to grow. Just beyond Omaha and Lincoln, residents of Fremont have access to the amenities of both metros while offering residents of Omaha and Lincoln access to the small-town feel, friendliness and amenities Fremont offers.

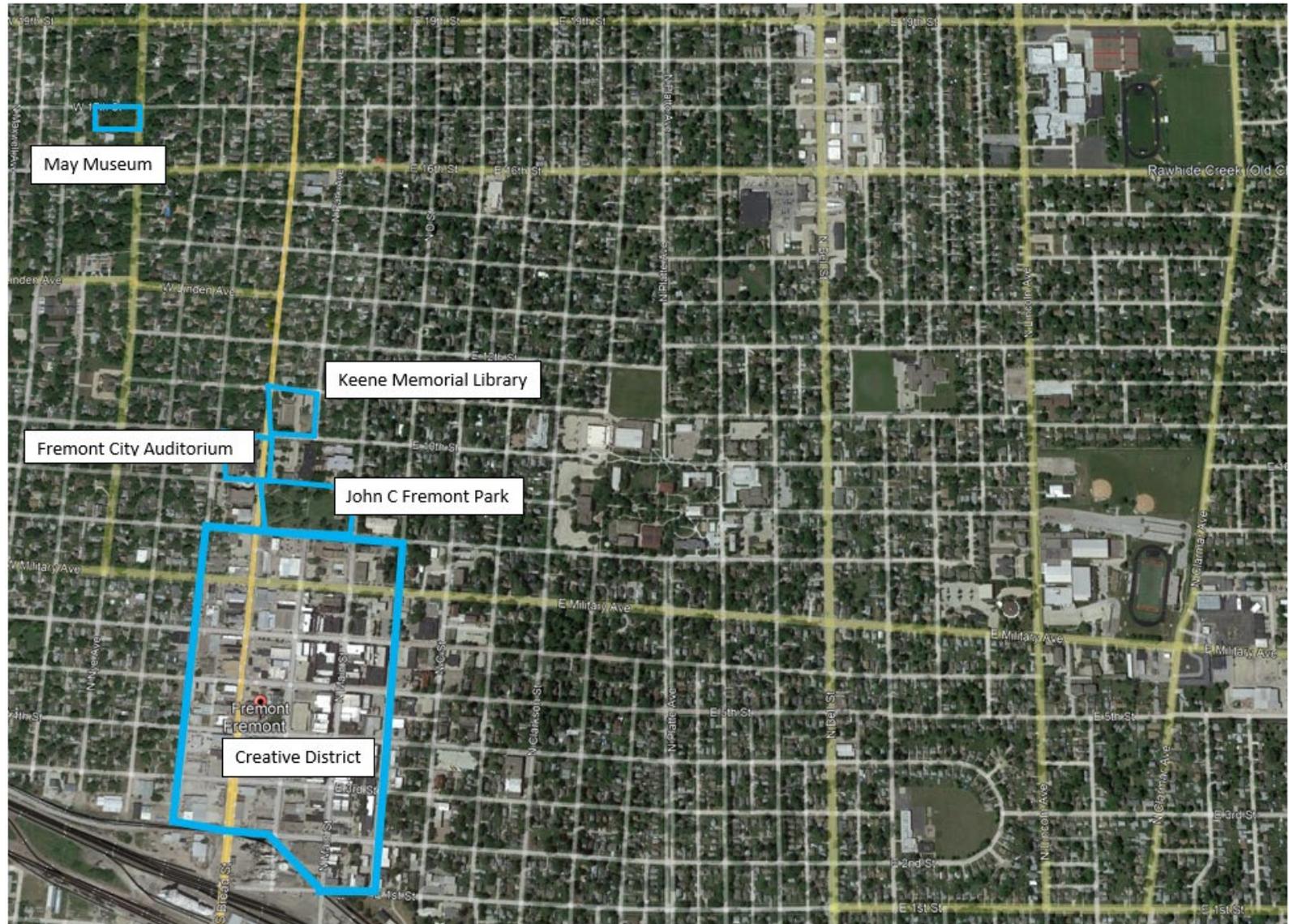
The Fremont Creative District encompasses the historic downtown of Fremont, Nebraska. Downtown is Fremont's historic center, housing the Dodge County courthouse and a number of longstanding cultural, commercial, and civic buildings. Given its central location among the City's well-established neighborhoods and its proximity to Midland University and Metropolitan Community College, Fremont's downtown is well suited for a Creative District offering a range of activities that appeal to residents and students, as well as regional visitors and tourists.

The bulk of the area is very pedestrian friendly, and Main Street has pedestrian "bump outs" at the corners to make it easier to cross the street. Broad Street and Military Avenue present challenges for pedestrians, however there is a traffic light with pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Military and Broad. The Keene Memorial Library and City Auditorium satellite locations are within a block of the perimeter of the Creative District. The Dodge County Historical Society, housed in the Louis E. May Museum, is about 12 blocks from the district perimeter. The satellite locations are poised to help bolster The Fremont Creative District marketing message and allow for unification of Fremont's cultural organizations overall.

Fremont's marketing campaign 'Here We Grow' was developed to highlight the vibrancy of our community and unlimited potential. This slogan symbolizes Fremont's rich history and opportunities. The campaign research and branding exercise was funded by the Greater Fremont Development Council (GFDC) who worked with community partners MainStreet Fremont, the City of Fremont, Fremont and Dodge County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce among others.



FREMONT CREATIVE DISTRICT MAP

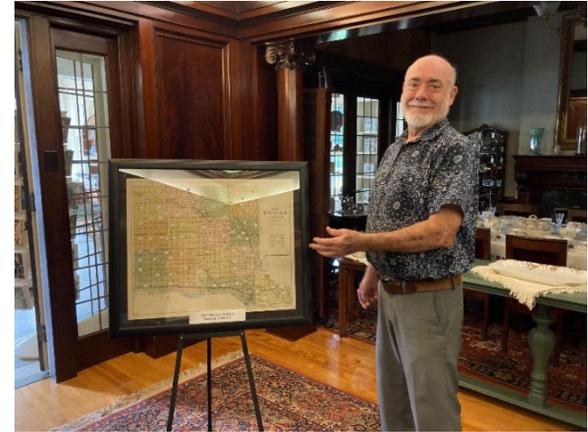


THE PROCESS

Planning for Fremont’s Creative District certification began around April of 2022 with City outreach to several area organizations to discuss the program. Once interest was gauged, a group of Discovery Partners from over 20 organizations representing Fremont’s business, cultural, arts and education sectors met regularly from April 2022 – September 2022. Fremont’s Letter of Interest was submitted in May and an Assets and SWOT analysis kick-off meeting was held at the May Museum July 7 with Director Jeff Kappeler (pictured right) presenting an overview of Fremont’s history and cultural heritage.

Discovery Partners worked in small groups and 2-3 sections of the Eligibility Assessment were presented and discussed at each meeting. The group also made an online survey available to the public during this time to gather input and presented educational materials to the public during Fremont’s first ever “Art Walk” in October 2022.

Fremont’s District Administrator met with several area groups to discuss the program throughout the process including the Business Improvement District #1, Ministerial Association, Kiwanis Club, Fremont Area Art Association membership and public and private high school arts educators. Specific input sessions were also held with downtown area minority business owners.



Discovery Partners

Tara Lea, Chamber of Commerce
Lindi Janulewicz, Fremont Area Art Association / Gallery 92 West
Molly Paden, Fremont and Dodge County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Angie Olson, City of Fremont
Therese Hoyle, Greater Fremont Development Council
Jennifer Dam, City of Fremont
Lee Meyer, Fremont Opera House
Dana Reeves, Digg Site
Sam Heineman, Business Improvement District #1
Al Duminy, Ministerial Association / Sinai Lutheran
Rossana Jaeger, Fremont Family Coalition

Mara Hornig, Fremont Public Schools
Katy Jones, Midland University
Stacy Heatherly, Eastern Nebraska Film Office
Melissa Diers, Fremont Area Community Foundation
Laura England-Biggs, Keene Memorial Library
Susan Larson Hogelin, Fremont Downtown Development Group
Barbara Christensen, Fremont Downtown Development Group
Jeff Kappeler, Dodge County Historical Society
Cindie Serrano, Lincoln Premium Poultry
Morgan Hegge, Lincoln Premium Poultry
Melissa Powell, MainStreet Fremont

FREMONT
Here We Grow

THE PROCESS (continued)

In November, with the guidance of consultant facilitator Charity Adams, we welcomed four diverse groups to the Fremont Opera House for community input sessions; two on November 15 and two on November 16. Groups were asked to participate in World Cafe conversations. These conversations encouraged participants to dream into the future as well as identify key barriers to success. These conversations were also opportunities to build relationships with people from multiple community sectors, generate interest and buy in, and build momentum for project development.

The Planning Committee consists of the District Administrator, Angie Olson with the City of Fremont, Tara Lea, President and CEO of Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce, Lindi Janulewicz, Executive Director of Fremont Area Art Association and Molly Paden, Executive Director of Fremont and Dodge County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Planning Committee drew from the information gathered in the Eligibility Assessment and community input sessions to develop a Creative District Strategic Plan with the help of VisionFusion consultant, Charity Adams. Prior to submitting this plan to the Nebraska Arts Council, the plan was shared in a community input session with the Discovery Partners and those who attended a November community input session.



High School students Cristofer Pablo Luna and Sheyli Leon take part in a community input session

Community Input Sessions

Kris Olson
Molly Paden
Therese Hoyle
Susan Larson Hogelin
Stacy Heatherly
Barbara Christensen
Jennifer Dam
Mark Jensen
Lee Meyer
Lindi Janulewicz
Jody Sanders
Sam Heineman
Al Duminy
Sally Ganem

Rossana Jaeger
Alicia Price
Casey Vaughan
Tara Lea
Cindi Lamprecht
Jacqueline Opheim
Katie Sears
Thompson
Ehren Parks
Kent Heermann
Jodi Heermann
Mara Hornig
Katy Jones
Joy McKay

Dale Hartshorn
Shaun Smith
Melissa Diers
Jason Adams
Kerstin O'Connor
Angie Olson
Glen Ellis
Madelyn Buck
Cristofer Pablo Luna
Sheyli Leon
Jenny Kiefer
Jackson Kiefer
Todd Eby
Monica Eby



Mark Jensen, City Council President, Lindi Janulewicz, FAAA Director and Jennifer Dam, Dir of City Planning take part in a community input session

MISSION, VISION, VALUES

MISSION

The Fremont Creative District enhances quality of life and economic vitality for our creative sector and businesses through advocacy, promotion, education, infrastructure and connections, and for our community and visitors by growing engagement in the arts, entertainment and cultural experiences.

VISION

Our vision is to improve quality of life and to support growth, inclusion, diversity and community connection through the development and support of Fremont’s Creative District.

VALUES

Promoting Inclusion:

We welcome and value diverse people, art and ideas.

Creating Partnerships:

We will forge cross-sector alliances to form a Creative District.

Providing Resources:

We will support the Creative District with marketing, venues and communications.

Enhancing Education:

We will provide opportunities to learn by engaging community in the arts.

Enriching Community:

We will create art, entertainment, and cultural activities for the benefit of all.

Impacting Economic Growth:

Our Creative District will be a destination that affords business opportunity for the Fremont area.



GOAL 1 – Developing a Foundation of Governance

Developing a Foundation of Governance.

Time Frame: April 2023 – Ongoing
Funding: \$1,000 (by-laws)

Community input indicated Governance of a Creative District as the highest priority to keep in mind during planning. As a key finding, we’ve prioritized governance in our first goal. This includes the creation of an Arts Council to govern the future district and professional drafting services of by-laws for the newly formed council.

<i>Action Step</i>	<i>Anticipated Date</i>	<i>Party Responsible</i>
Research how other Nebraska Creative Districts are governed	April - May 2023	District Administrator
Determine potential Arts Council member expectations	May – June 2023	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee
Create list of potential Arts Council members	May – June 2023	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee
Make the ask	June – July 2023	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee
Hold regular Arts Council Meetings	July/Aug 2023 - ongoing	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council
Review Creative District Strategic Plan with Arts Council	September 2023	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council
Hire attorney to draft Arts Council by-laws (\$1000)	August – September 2023	Planning Committee in collaboration with the Arts Council
Research funding management policies of other Nebraska Creative Districts and current City partners	June - July 2023	District Administrator
Discuss project with city finance, City Administrator and Mayor	June - July 2023	District Administrator
Meet with gallery, CVB and Chamber to discuss research results and decide on best practices for a Fiscal Management Policy	June - August 2023	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council
Adapt 10-year practical vision into a focused Strategic Plan	2024 – 2025	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council

GOAL 2 – Championing the Concept

Championing the Concept.

Time Frame: April 2023 – Ongoing
Funding: \$9,000 (marketing)

In response to the Nebraska Arts Council concerns surrounding identity, marketing objectives to develop Fremont’s story and marketing package are key to Goal #2. Identifying, implementing and funding cultural and artistic projects will help champion the Fremont Creative District and improve the district’s sustainability. Goal 2 also addresses signage and outreach, weaknesses that are evident in our SWOT analysis and elements which community input feedback noted as an important component in building a successful Creative District. Championing the Concept includes future grant funding goals (not included in anticipated funding above).

<i>Action Step</i>	<i>Anticipated Date</i>	<i>Party Responsible</i>
Implement long-term marketing steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research / interview firms for marketing plan • Develop marketing strategy that includes use of SWOT analysis, Eligibility Assessment, Here We Grow campaign and artist outreach • Implement the marketing plan to promote the Creative District 	June – Winter 2023	Lindi Janulewicz in collaboration with Planning Committee and marketing firm
Evaluate the marketing plan	Annually	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council
Research and apply for Development Grant through the NAC	Spring 2023	District Administrator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire consultant for feasibility study for amphitheater (based on Development Grant funding: \$20,000 – 30,000) 	Summer / Fall 2024	Planning Committee and Arts Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute amphitheater project (based on Development Grant funding: \$250,000 – 350,000) 	Spring – Fall 2025	Planning Committee and Arts Council
Identify a community-based project (ie mural, QR code history walk, sculpture garden etc.).	Spring 2024	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council
Research cost of signage and wayfinding ideas and Sports Arena Financing Assistance	Fall 2024 – Spring 2025	District Administrator and City Planner
Research public art installation potential projects	2024	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and apply for Our Town Grant for public art project 	Summer 2026	District Administrator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement community-based project (based on Our Town Grant - \$10,000 - \$15,000) 	Summer/Fall 2026	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council
Review feasibility studies surrounding one-way streets (based on future grant funding – possibly CCCFF Planning Grant if available)	2024 – 2026	District Administrator, Arts Council, City Planner, Community
Research improvements between JCF Park / downtown connection and additional downtown greenspaces and funding sources	2026 – 2028	District Administrator, Arts Council, City Planner, Community

GOAL 2 – Educating and Uniting

**Educating and Uniting
Consumers, Business Owners and Policy Makers.**

**Time Frame: May 2023 – March 2027
Funding: None**

Collaboration and buy-in were noted as key to our Creative District efforts. Collaboration was found to be a strength, weakness and opportunity. We’ve included steps to build on collaboration as a strength and create opportunities through improved collaboration. Community outreach with area business owners revealed concerns about policy and building enhancements. Goal #3 includes connecting our business owners with policy makers as well as helping downtown businesses navigate ordinances.

Action Step	Anticipated Date	Party Responsible
Make individual visits with all businesses in the Creative District	May – Sept 2023	Tara Lea
Meet with artists and match them with (fall) Art Walk businesses that might be able to showcase their products	May – Sept 2023 (ongoing)	Tara Lea
Meet with the City Planner to discuss how the Creative District project could impact Fremont’s Comprehensive Plan	May 2023	District Administrator
Meet with the City Planner and City Clerk to discuss ordinances for downtown businesses to implement creative change (murals, food trucks, asphalt art, signage etc.)	May – June 2023	District Administrator
Share results of ordinance discussion with Planning Committee and area businesses	July – September 2023	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee
Apply for CDBG downtown revitalization funds for downtown business façade improvements	Fall 2023	District Administrator, Northeast Nebraska Development District, MainStreet of Fremont
Implement downtown business façade improvements façade program	Spring 2024 - 2027	District Administrator, Northeast Nebraska Development District, MainStreet of Fremont
Research bringing Illana Preuss to the community for a ReCast Your City presentation (or similar speaker) – Cost \$995 (research local grant funding)	2024	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council
Consider the Recast (Illana Preuss) Get-It-Done-For-Your-City Program – Cost \$15,000 (research local grant funding)	2025 - 2026	District Administrator in collaboration with Planning Committee and Arts Council

PRACTICAL VISION – 10 YEAR VISION

The practical vision already exists within the group. The Practical Vision Workshop was facilitated by consultant Charity Adams and allowed the latent hopes to emerge. Everyone has a piece of the puzzle - the vision. When the pieces are fitted together during the vision workshop, they build a concrete picture of the group's vision.

Participants reviewed the Environmental Scan and SWOT and answered the questions:
What do we want to see in place in 10 years as a result of our collective actions?



Collaborate to Fund and Maintain A Successful District

- Policies for money distribution
- A consistent funding-source
- Collaboration with local businesses outside of downtown
- Businesses and organizations partnering to create arts and culture activities
- Donor recognition sculpture/wall

Building and Improving On What We Have

- Murals/artwork on buildings and windows
- Become the Hallmark Channel “community of choice”
- Improved historic facades
- A culturally diverse look, feel and involvement
- Lights in alleys
- Rooftop bars
- Connect park and add green space

Attract Visitors and Locals by Hosting Diverse Events

- Farmer’s Market
 - Spirits
 - Music
 - Booths
- Diverse events
- Party bus to bring people from West Omaha weekly
- Historic/Art scavenger hunt app
- Multi-cultural event twice a year (festival)
- Events that draw people downtown
- Spaces that draw people to it
- Activities that are family friendly

Dedicated Management to Create and Implement Policies for Sustainability

- Create a Board to Manage Governance
- Implement policies and procedures
- Marketing campaign targeted to west Omaha
- Measurement procedures
- Volunteer cleaning crew ie Boy Scouts
- Define who we are

Develop Creative Livable Attractive Spaces

- Amphitheater
- Multipurpose/creative outside space
- Maker space for local artists
- Interactive fountain
- Children’s Museum type space
- Welcome Center

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MEASUREMENT

Through implementation of the strategic plan, an Arts Council will be formed. This council will include the District Administrator as a non-voting member. The Arts Council will evaluate the strategic plan quarterly during the first two years. Evaluation of the plan will occur annually thereafter, but meeting agenda items will regularly reflect goals and action steps of the plan.

Methods for evaluating the success of the Fremont Creative District will initially be logged and tracked in a spreadsheet. Once tracking methods are evaluated for utility, approved and adopted long-term, the spreadsheet method may be revised. Tracking will include event attendance, marketing / social media statistics, vacancy rates and sales tax revenue. Data submitted in the Eligibility Assessment will also continue to be collected and included in evaluation. This includes city population, number of creative industries within the district and number of businesses within district.

Additional, qualitative methods will also be tracked. These methods include:

Attitude Assessment

- Have attitudes surrounding our downtown (Creative District) changed?
- Assessed through surveys, attendance and future feedback

Exemplar Standard

- Are we an example to other communities developing or administering Creative Districts?
- Are other communities asking Fremont for suggestions, tips or best practices?
- Are members of other communities sharing positive details about a trip to Fremont’s Creative District?



This Strategic Plan is submitted for consideration by the Fremont Creative District Strategic Planning Committee (with the help and input of our many beloved Discovery Partners listed on page 3)

Angie Olson, District Admin
Grant Coordinator
City of Fremont

Tara Lea
President and CEO
Fremont Area Chamber

Lindi Janulewicz
Executive Director
Fremont Area Art Assoc

Molly Paden
Executive Director
Fremont & Dodge Co CVB