



CITY OF EDMONDS ARTS & CULTURE

2017 ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

The City of Edmonds Arts and Culture 2017 Economic Impact Study demonstrates that the arts and culture sector has a significant positive impact on the Edmonds economy and contributes to quality of life and community image and identity. The Edmonds community has worked hard to enhance the arts and culture sector since the latest update of the Community Cultural Plan in 2014, and the City and community partners have made efforts to integrate the arts into the city's physical infrastructure, planning, image, and brand identity.

Recommendations for how Edmonds can build on its arts and culture strengths and further enhance the economy and community overall are listed below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Strengthen the arts and culture sector citywide in economic development efforts.

- » **Embrace arts and culture as a core part of the Edmonds community identity citywide.** Consider the entire city in implementing arts and culture strategies, especially along Highway 99 where there is greater racial and ethnic diversity, and increase the arts and culture network to include new, informal, and non-traditional entities.

2 Integrate arts and culture's contributions to the economy in new and existing community economic development efforts.

- » **Seek Creative District designation through the Washington State Arts Commission.** A "creative district" is a hub for social and business activity that includes cultural facilities, creative industries, and arts-related businesses. Designation enhances Edmonds' ability to pursue creative industry-related grants, better promote the community's arts and culture-focused identity, recruit creative entrepreneurs, and increase tourism.
- » **Identify arts and culture businesses and stakeholders as a targeted economic cluster along with others identified in the City's Economic Development Element.** Explore connections to technology firms and other organizations in creative industries.
- » **Advocate for city infrastructure decisions that support arts and culture growth.** Bring artists, business leaders, and entrepreneurs into current discussions to improve infrastructure that allows more options to experience Edmond's arts and culture attractions. For example, efforts include the 4th Avenue Arts Corridor to build a better walking connection between the ECA, Civic Field, and Main Street.
- » **Cultivate a robust arts and culture sector** with a healthy array of large and small entities and a diverse constellation of attractions.

- Identify a limited number of cornerstone arts events or disciplines that can grow to become key anchors of arts and culture in Edmonds. The importance of Edmonds Center for the Arts in the Edmonds cultural ecosystem as demonstrated by this report may help to set such a direction.
- Explore ways to support small organizations and businesses, as many of Edmonds arts and culture organizations employ less than five people, such as economic gardening and business mentoring. The stronger the constellation of arts and culture organizations, big and small, the stronger the entire network.
- Foster diverse offerings across artistic disciplines, through a variety of settings from formal to informal. It is the diversity of arts offerings that create a positive arts and culture identity in Edmonds, draws participation, and is valued by residents and visitors alike.

3 Collaborate to attract target audiences.

To maintain a pipeline of arts and culture supporters, it will be important to actively address the arts and culture interests of individuals under 40 and to reflect the region’s evolving demographics regarding race and ethnicity.

- » **Coordinate efforts**, including programming and promotions, to create a critical mass of offerings for target audiences, bridging across multiple venues.
- » **Expand arts programming targeted to those under 40**. Consider ways to link social and entertainment components, especially around food and drink, as well as family-friendly opportunities.
- » **Design advisory functions** for civic, not-for-profit, and public entities that bring representatives of those under 40 and underrepresented populations into planning and decision-making. This is likely to look different than traditional board roles, and should accommodate the limited time availability of those under 40.

4 Work across the community to develop positive visitor experiences.

The economic value of arts and culture visitors is enhanced when they eat, drink, and shop locally, or when they stay overnight. These extended experiences work best when place-based features are coordinated with arts and culture “products.”

- » **Bundle dining/drinking, recreation, and lodging opportunities** with arts and cultural experiences. Some of these packages can be tailored at specific target audiences (see item above).
- » **Make sure the logistics of visitor experiences are easy**, with convenient parking, clear wayfinding, etc. Understand and address existing barriers and points of friction.
- » **Promote Edmonds’ parks and waterfront activities** at arts and culture venues, activities, and events.

5 Market Edmonds regionally and tier marketing investments and strategies.

This study shows that residents and “day trippers” are the primary sources of economic impact related to arts and culture in Edmonds today. There remains potential to reach and effectively serve visitors beyond a 30-minute drive time, and to intentionally build tourism linked to arts and culture, but more research is needed.

- » **Prioritize marketing and promotion in the areas of North Seattle, Kingston, and Snohomish County, defined roughly by a 30-minute drive**. Assess competition within that drive time area, and identify program niches likely to draw from those communities. Consider opportunities to serve as a satellite for Seattle arts and culture organizations, thereby minimizing the need to drive into downtown Seattle.
- » **Explore additional opportunities to attract out-of-area tourists**. While this study indicates that Edmonds is not currently an overnight destination but a regional attraction, the value of overnight visitors may make investment in the tourist market worthwhile. Explore opportunities, including ways to better connect Edmonds arts and culture with the cruise industry.
- » **Continue work with Snohomish County and Washington State arts, recreation, and tourism entities** to strengthen and promote Edmonds’ offerings.