



Arts, Culture, and Tourism Sector Strategies

Vision

We believe in utilizing the responsive, flexible, and innovative industries of arts, culture, and tourism to stimulate economic activity, create sustainable living conditions within the sector, provide service to our communities, and promote the values of hope, joy, equity, exploration, and creativity, thereby raising the quality of life for everyone.



[Watch the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Sector Strategy Video](#)

Rationale

Tourism has been a significant industry for the region since the mid-19th century, whereas the contributions of Art and Culture have only more recently been recognized as providing synergistic growth and diversification opportunities. Historically, many industries within the sector deliver lower wages, may lack in typical employee safety nets and upward mobility, and are often defined by gig and seasonal work (Yang et al., 2021). With this important caveat in mind, the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Sector is a key economic sector in the region, drawing significant visitor numbers and revenue. The region has a higher than average arts vibrancy index rating. Encompassing agritourism, the Redwoods and coastal attractions, seasonal festivals and heritage sites celebrating indigenous and other local cultures, the sector has both well-established regional assets and capacity and potential for further development.



“We have a thriving, nice art community, you know. People in my experience are way more down to earth here.”

Annually, the area’s state and national parks attract approximately 5 million visitors. Overall, visitors generate about \$1.3 billion in spending (Dean Runyan Associates, 2023)—about \$4,081 per Redwood Region resident, exceeding the statewide equivalent of \$3,433.

Local feedback emphasizes the need to balance tourism development with community needs, particularly housing. There are concerns about the impact of short-term rentals on housing availability and affordability.

“Everybody’s trying to figure out how to survive as that [corporate] money comes in. You know, as corporations buy up clusters of inns. All the inns in Albion got bought by a corporation recently. One corporation. But all these small B&Bs in Little River...what’s gonna happen now?”

Arts, Culture, and Tourism, shows signs of employment specialization and resilience in two industries, including Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions (NAICS 712³) and Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries (NAICS 711). These industries have a minimal carbon footprint, but support few family-sustaining occupations.

Reading RISE’s Industry Tables

In Regional Plan Part 1 and in this report, we have provided data overviews of each priority sector. These definitions are intended to help the reader interpret those tables:

Employment: The number of workers in the Region who are employed by that industry.

Location Quotient (LQ): A ratio of ratios: the ratio of workers employed by that industry compared to total workers in the REGION, compared to the ratio of workers employed by that industry compared to total workers STATEWIDE.

% Change in Location Quotient: The change in location quotient between 2013 and 2022. Industries shaded blue are becoming more prominent in the region and those in yellow are becoming less prominent, when compared to the state.

% Job Growth: How many more workers are employed in the industry compared to 2013.

Job to Job Multiplier: A measure of how many additional jobs are created as a result of one new job in a specific industry or sector.

% Family Sustaining Job: Calculated at \$27.49/hour or higher.

Green House Gas (GHG) per Job: Reported in kg of carbon per job, these estimates are derived from national EPA data and may not reflect the true value for local jobs.

³North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes are numeric codes that identify a business’s primary industry. They are used by federal statistical agencies to collect, analyze, and publish data on the U.S. economy. NAICS codes are also used for administrative, regulatory, contracting, and taxation purposes. More information is available on the Census Bureau’s website.

Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation (NAICS 487) appears underdeveloped, given the region’s numerous natural attractions, with a location quotient of just 0.5. This industry supports a high proportion of family-sustaining occupations, with a relatively moderate climate impact.

Figure 3 Arts, Culture, and Tourism Industries Performance

| | Employment | LQ | % Change in LQ | % Job Growth | Job-to-Job Multiplier | % Family Sustaining Job | GHG per Job (kq) | |
|--|------------|-----|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and ... (711) | 2,364 | 1.0 | 28% | 31% | 1.4 | 1% | 94 | Specialization & Resilience |
| Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar ... (712) | 114 | 1.2 | 59% | 59% | 1.3 | 18% | 557 | |
| Air Transportation (481) | 246 | 0.7 | 573% | 631% | 2.3 | 89% | 450,095 | Other Industries |
| Broadcasting (except Internet) (515) | 211 | 0.5 | -42% | -24% | 3.5 | 44% | 122 | |
| Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation (487) | 379 | 0.5 | -3% | 15% | 1.5 | 53% | 3,565 | |
| Publishing Industries (except Internet) (511) | 121 | 0.1 | -69% | -62% | 1.5 | 32% | 352 | |
| Rail Transportation (482) | 3.1 | 0.1 | -19% | -47% | 2.3 | 96% | 316,974 | |
| Other Information Services (519) | 56 | 0.1 | -15% | 26% | 2.9 | 25% | 633 | |
| Food Services and Drinking Places (722) | 10,187 | 0.9 | -6% | 1% | 1.2 | 13% | 623 | |
| Accommodation (721) | 1,873 | 1.2 | -10% | -7% | 1.3 | 19% | 941 | |
| Transit and Ground Passenger Transporta... (485) | 536 | 0.3 | 18% | 279% | 1.2 | 25% | 4,273 | |
| Motion Picture and Sound Recording Indu... (512) | 177 | 0.1 | -25% | -22% | 1.7 | 2% | 145 | |
| Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Ind... (713) | 1,081 | 0.8 | -21% | -28% | 1.2 | 4% | 777 | |

4th Quartile (Highest Performing)
 3rd Quartile
 2nd Quartile
 1st Quartile (Lowest Performing)

Note. Data source from IMPLAN. Author’s calculations. 2022 data with 2013 growth comparison. NAICS codes shown in parentheses. Employment figures include proprietors and may differ substantially from QCEW data, which include only employees.

While the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, and other shocks temporarily disrupted these industries, the outlook for this sector looks strong (*Economic Impact*, n.d.). From 2013 through 2022, traveler spending to the region increased 27.1%, and industry earnings increased 70.4%—outpacing the equivalent statewide figures of 20.3% and 53.6% (Dean Runyan Associates, 2023). Furthermore, the EDD projects that Redwood Region Leisure and Hospitality sector employment will grow faster than any other sector through 2030. A challenge for the sector is translating this growth into family-sustaining occupations. There is a noted need to focus on increasing visitor spending rather than just visitor numbers, with cultural events potentially generating more revenue than outdoor recreation.

“[We have] \$59 air flights from Burbank. We should be leveraging a different demographic of people who can travel here now. We can have a foodie tour. We can have a recreation tour. We can have a fishing tour.”

The first thing to note about the Arts, Culture, and Tourism (ACT) Sector is the sheer diversity and complexity of classification. This is a sector of industries that is broadly inclusive of fine artists, tour guides, professionals working in digital and print media, as well as landscape architects, furniture builders, and restaurateurs – and the list goes on and on. Preliminary review of sources such as the 2023 Otis College Report on the Creative Economy and the University of Texas at San Antonio indicate a sector that includes over 110 distinct six-digit NAICS codes.

This diversity is further complicated by the seasonal and “gig work” nature of much of the sector, so that getting an accurate sector assessment can be an exceedingly daunting task. Again, according to the 2023 Otis College Report: *The creative sectors do not share a cohesive workforce infrastructure and employer-worker arrangements vary from one industry to another, which has created large obstacles for policy making. Many individuals do not practice their art or creative pursuits as their primary, wage-earning job. Yet many counts of the workforce focus only on those employed full-time by organizations.*

While the Otis College Report was in the context of the creative economy, many of the same issues are identifiable in other tourism-associated industries, such as Outdoor Recreation. Ultimately, while none of these challenges are unsurmountable, they are very real and unresolved, both regionally and nationwide. Use of census data as well as improved regional data-collecting systems, in addition to IMPLAN analysis, could provide a clearer picture of the true economic impact of the sector.

“I think when communities are supporting the arts and people see that happen, it does give people a sense of hope. It creates a sense of community hope.”

Keeping in mind such sector and regional issues as the lack of sustainable career options, rural isolation, and shortage of professional networks, it is important to recognize the tense, inequitable, and often extractive relationships between rural and urban populations, as can be displayed in a few direct findings from Redwood Region RISE, noted below:

- ◆ One particularly relevant statistic from the Public Health Summary: 43% of Grade 11 students in the Redwood Region reported “Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness,” compared to the state-wide average of 37%.
- ◆ From the Insights Report: *“People often leave the region to move to less remote, larger communities with more opportunities for education or jobs...People who love this region aren’t able to make a living or a life here.”*
- ◆ And finally, from Regional Plan Part 1: *“Over and over, research participants expressed anxiety that the Redwood Region is not a place of opportunity for young people.”*

“I think I love living in Humboldt County because being a Tribal member, we’ve never relocated, we’ve always been where we are. And so that just really makes me feel like this is where I’m supposed to be.”

These rural-urban dynamics are not only expressed in the data and statistics and the interviews, as artists themselves consistently return to this theme in their own work. The story of the wide-eyed country kid getting off the bus in the big city and ready to make their fortune may be a trope—but many tropes manifest due to being grounded in lived experience.

The extractive relationship between urban and rural areas is often cyclical. Not only are many of the “best and brightest” in a rural region compelled to leave to pursue better (or even in some cases just *existing*) job opportunities. Even if a rural community can raise its own profile and attract new tourists, residents, and businesses—as seen in the section on sector weaknesses—it often falls victim to gentrification and rising cost of living. This dynamic forces long-term residents even further towards the outskirts and increasing levels of community hopelessness, *further* encouraging exodus to other larger communities with more opportunities. This is the spiral that needs to be disrupted. Disruption of this extractive cycle will not only require the hard work of building out and structuring new, income-generating career opportunities, but also of fundamentally shifting the economic narrative of the region. A central idea incorporated into Redwood Region RISE is the Hope Economy theory of change, as outlined in the Regional Report, Part 1:

“In the Hope Economy theory of change, by cultivating a (realistic) belief in a hopeful future, individuals are more empowered to act, innovate, and better contribute to economic activity and growth, thereby restoring a sense of agency, self-efficacy, and community pride...

The idea is that the approach helps create an inclusive environment that supports innovation and growth in disinvested communities by fostering hope, thereby tapping into a latent creativity resource, and likely multiple new marketable opportunities.”

Creativity and narrative-building are bedrock proficiencies of the ACT Sector, and an emphasis on a Hope Economy-based approach to economic development promises to not only grow and refine the ACT Sector, but to also have multiplicative effects across other sectors throughout the region.

When synthesizing Table input into regional strategies, we have initially designated three main overarching strategies: (1) Regional Networking and Resource Sharing; (2) Training and Skill Development; and (3) Creative Placemaking. The first two are similar to RRRISE’s general strategies for development, while the third is more directly specific to the sector. Further, under each strategy we have listed three tactics, or groupings of specific ideas/needs/potential investments for the sector. These listed strategies and tactics are, of course, non-exhaustive, but intended as jumping-off points, and represent initial needs/solutions identified by the Sector Table.

“I think that [Great Redwood Trail] has a lot of opportunity. I’ve seen this bike trail in South Carolina and it has amazing stuff. You can rent bikes and you can stop at these little markets and eat. It’s really fun and cool.”

Arts, Culture, and Tourism Sector Strategies

Strategy 1: Regional Networking and Resource Sharing

This strategy emphasizes regional asset mapping, sector networking, sector data-collection and landscape assessment, sector advocacy, and innovation investment. This broadly aligns with the *Industry Strategies* cluster from the Regional Report. This strategy has been listed first, since comprehensive sector assessment, data-collection, and networking are all part of a foundational groundwork that is integral for the successful future implementation and evaluation of additional strategic investments in the sector.

Regional Networking and Advocacy

As seen in the Sector Overview in the “Strengths” section, we are blessed in this region with an abundance of ecological and cultural resources. Sector Table Members repeatedly called attention to the difficulty in staying up-to-date and connected with what activities their compatriots were engaged in, even within their own communities let alone the entire region. Regularly, one member or another would be heard to say to another something along the lines of, “Oh, you’re doing that? I had no idea!” This relative lack of connectivity means that we are not fully actualizing the total arts, culture, and tourism assets and opportunities for joint projects and knowledge-sharing. Additionally, it could hamper regional advocacy to promote investment in the sector while addressing structural inequities between rural and urban California.

Most professionals and organizations within the sector are highly motivated to build relationships with one another. But without external support, such networking done regionally is almost always facilitated and maintained on a volunteer basis by already over-worked individuals and resource-tapped organizations. Such systems are inherently vulnerable and commonly wane after some period. Because of this, the Sector Table recommends the strategy of investment in regional asset mapping and networking efforts, leveraging existing local arts agencies, tourism centers, and colleges as primary partners and resources.

Regional Branding and Promotion

A recurring theme that emerged during Sector Table meetings and individual interviews was members having a lack of confidence in or connection with regional or community-wide marketing strategies, symptomatic of under-investment and a fractured approach to branding and marketing in the sector. The Sector Table recommends strategic investment in a regional approach to branding the Redwood Region as a hidden gem of arts and cultural engagement for tourists and residents alike. Leveraging current and planned “Visit California” resources, funding and strategic planning, such branding would build on the regional core strengths of outdoor recreation-based tourism, positively link the sectors of arts, culture, and tourism, and would also create a significant opportunity for cross-cutting strategy development in collaboration with the Working Lands Sector in agritourism.

In addition, by leveraging low fare air travel options to the region and implementing better connectivity and tourism services to the airport, the Redwood Region can further achieve its tourism goals. Improved air accessibility with



lower fares and increased flight frequencies can attract more visitors to the area, enhancing the reach and impact of the regional branding and marketing strategies. This enhanced connectivity can contribute to the overall growth and development of the tourism sector in the region.

Local feedback emphasizes the importance of aligning with Visit California's regional marketing plan, focusing not only on hub communities but also on gateway and smaller, isolated communities.

Regional Data-Collection and Asset-Mapping

As noted in the Sector Overview, the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Sector is particularly diverse and wide-reaching. Coupled with the reality that many professionals within the sector are often working multiple jobs (or “gigs”), which may have vastly different levels of documentation, be seasonally employed, or may be relatively off-the-grid entrepreneurs, this means that gathering high-quality, accurate data can be particularly challenging. Additionally, while many Arts, Culture, and Tourism-oriented organizations, businesses, or professionals want to gather data on their operations and can clearly see the benefits, most of these same entities have very limited human resources and can rarely spare the work-hours necessary to obtain said data, let alone employ a specialist with the required skill set for data acquisition and synthesis. There is a need to fund research and data on the art/culture scene in the region as such data is often lacking. Larger research projects tend to overlook rural areas because artists are not familiar with how to make their operations “count” for large data reports (“counting” usually means reporting art sales, and many rural artists and artists of color sell by word of mouth or through market style sales).

Another facet of this tactic is that to fully unlock the potential of sector development, innovation will be required. As noted above, many organizations in the sector are not only limited in personnel, but cash strapped, forcing them often out of necessity to maintain operations “as they’ve always been done.” For all the above reasons, the ACT Sector Table, as well as RISE consultants, recommend strategic investments in a regional “landscape assessment” of the sector as well as an on-going regional sector datahub.

Strategy 2: Training and Skill Development

This strategy emphasizes sector-specific entrepreneurship training and other skill development. Sector-specific training is required to create, support, and sustain entrepreneurship among workers in the sector. Artists, culture workers, and tourism-based entrepreneurs are uniquely positioned to develop partnerships with other sectors and implement new programs and cross-sector strategies to create more diverse, socially valuable, and community-based professional pathways for sector workers. This aligns with the *Skill Strategies* of the Regional Report.

Entrepreneurship Support

Whether as mural artists, river guides, or landscape designers, workers in the sector often find themselves in business for themselves. Indeed, for many professionals in the sector, entrepreneurship represents perhaps the only opportunity for career upward mobility—a regional issue that is particularly severe in the Art, Culture, and Tourism Sector. This dynamic requires individuals to develop the broad skill sets of small business owners, while continuing to develop their own craft. Professionals employed by an organization (particularly nonprofits) may have so little staff support that their job duties more closely resemble that of a small business owner. Entrepreneurship is particularly strong in the Outdoor Recreation (and related Tourism) industries, and industry representatives have called for increased investment in entrepreneurship development programs, as well as the potential development of new and innovative programs, such as a pilot program that could match budding entrepreneurs in the industry with data-identified community needs or areas of regional growth.

“We’ve been talking about getting an apprentice program [in the arts] started so that young people can sort of find out that all of this exists. And they can consider as they grow up in this community, they can actually dig clay from under their feet or they could harvest wood from the forest where that’s a huge part of our history and culture here.”

Partnerships with other Sectors

Cross-cutting strategies between sectors are core to RISE’s philosophy. As noted above in the section on Regional Branding, that tactic opens many possible collaborations with the Working Lands Sector through agritourism in the areas of cannabis, wine, and niche farm products such as dairy. Additionally, there are also findings within RISE’s data that indicate a rich vein of potential partnerships with the Health and Caregiving Sector:

“Monitoring isolation and loneliness and promoting quality social connection may therefore be effective approaches to improving the health of the region.”
– Regional Plan Part 1: Public Health Summary

The research on the positive effects of active participation in arts, culture, and outdoor activities on mental and physical health is robust and extensive. There is a novel approach of holistically addressing behavioral health, known broadly as *social prescription*, by which primary-care providers might prescribe a patient such activities as seeing a play with friends, taking a pottery class, or taking part in a guided nature tour. Social prescription programs are a long-time mainstay of behavioral health care in other countries such as the UK, and are rapidly taking root across the nation, including in the entire state of Massachusetts and a new pilot program at Stanford University. There are significant and growing resources for this kind of development, and investment in this area could not only provide new and sustainable career pathways for sector professionals but could also be a key strategy in addressing the health crises present in the region.

New Certification and Professional Development Programs

New career pathways within the sector are enabled or facilitated by new certification and professional development programs. For one concrete example, Outdoor Recreation industry leaders have identified access issues for the many layers and types of certifications required or desired in the industry (wilderness rescue, sailboat instruction, dive certification, etc.). For almost all these certifications it is necessary to travel to urban centers. And once those certifications are obtained, many industry professionals choose to relocate for better career opportunities. Industry leaders suggest that investment in a “home-grown” program of certifications training for Outdoor Recreation would significantly enhance regional competitiveness.

As another example, certifying artists and cultural workers along with tourism workers as Certified Tourism Ambassadors has been in place since 2015 in Lake County and is proposed for Mendocino Counties and would support regional branding and engagement with and through the arts and cultures for tourists and residents. Finally, existing social-emotional learning and teaching pedagogies for training artists in educational and social goals could be leveraged to train artists to contribute directly to the communities where they have chosen to live, offering after-school, school-based, senior center, and other arts-based

engagement. With rigorous and accessible training, artists and cultural workers have enormous potential to contribute to the health and well-being of their communities in ways that leverage their artistic disciplines and creativity.

In-depth collaboration with institutions of higher learning, government agencies, and industry organizations would be required, but significant investment in new pilot programs, partnered with such institutions, would manifest many long-term benefits and competitive edges for the sector, its workforce, and the region. Exploring partnerships with community colleges and high schools to broaden career pathways in the arts and tourism sectors, potentially including programs that combine practical skills with entrepreneurship training, are seen as a need in north coast communities.

Strategy 3: Creative Placemaking

This strategy emphasizes investment in new community hubs, development of mobile services to reach isolated communities, and improved quality of life through cultural development. This strategy is in alignment with Redwood Region RISE's *Infrastructure and Transportation Strategies* and is primarily targeted at community service organizations and nonprofits, as well as local governments throughout the region, with vital secondary benefits accrued to the entire sector through community and economic development and increased access to workspaces and affordable housing. Creative placemaking not only creates spaces that attract tourists but also bolsters the morale and sense of place of local residents. By integrating arts, culture, and creativity into community spaces, creative placemaking initiatives can help make an area more appealing to visitors while also fostering a sense of identity and pride among the local community. This approach not only enhances the overall aesthetic and cultural vibrancy of a place, but also contributes to its economic and social well-being.

Community Hubs

The wide geographical distances in the region, coupled with decades of state under-investment in rural areas, precipitates the sector's need for infrastructure investments, including maker spaces (with potential mobile units), affordable live/work studio options, visitor centers, community cultural hubs, and so on. In most cases and many communities, this investment would not necessarily require construction of new facilities, but could instead be focused on redevelopment of under-utilized buildings and neighborhoods, becoming an additional driver of community economic revitalization. Communities emphasize the importance of investing in physical infrastructure such as parks, trails, and family-friendly spaces that benefit both the community and tourism.

Integration of Sector in Economic and Community Development Efforts

Professionals within the sector are experts in the management and sustainable development of all the cultural and ecological resources that we value in this region and consider integral to our quality of life. This expertise is vital to leverage to develop communities where people not only can live, but they *want* to live—which not only benefits existing individuals and communities in the region, but is an enticement for new investment and relocation.

“That’s kind of the model we’re all gearing ourselves toward: the destination retreat income needs to then turn around and serve the local economy and the local people.”

Case Study

The Mendocino Art Center is a physical gathering space for artists that is exploring how to be more inclusive and connected to diverse members of the community. Its programming includes a gallery space, workshops, residency programs, lodging, and events.

More information: www.mendocinoartcenter.org

However, it is important to also make the distinction between *Creative Placemaking* and *Creative Placekeeping*. According to the US Department of Arts and Culture, *Creative Placekeeping* is

“...the active care and maintenance of a place and its social fabric by the people who live and work there. It is not just preserving buildings but keeping the cultural memories associated with a locale alive, while supporting the ability of local people to maintain their way of life as they choose.”

As described in the Sector SWOT, gentrification and erosion or exploitation of vulnerable cultures is a real risk in the development of the sector. We must take caution that in the process of *placemaking*, we are also *keeping* the places necessary for a high quality of life for all residents. This strategy is less of a call for specific investments, and instead a strong recommendation to include professionals from the sector in all aspects of economic and community development, decision-making, and visioning.



Community Investments and Mobile services

The vast distances and limited public transportation within the region make it often extremely difficult for organizations to reach everyone who would benefit from their services, and the most remote communities are often most underserved and vulnerable. There are already regional examples of mobile services in the sector, such as Playhouse Arts’ Wonder Wagon, and further development of similar services would be an important investment, particularly when viewed through the lens of regional equity. Lake County just re-launched their long dormant Bookmobile, and a companion Mobile Arts Studio (and possible tool lending library) could partner with the County Library to establish community-based programs bringing essential assets to remote communities and creating economic opportunities for artists and cultural workers.

Figure 4 Arts, Culture, and Tourism: Alignment with Key Program Objectives

| Job Quality and Access | Equity | Climate |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Laying the foundational ‘groundwork’ to strategically innovate the Sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage local and regional partners to develop a regional asset map and strengthen regional networking (joint projects, knowledge-sharing). • Develop a regional sector datahub to enable organizations to strategically innovate. • Develop a regional brand that positions the Redwood Region as an arts and cultural hub, aligning with “Visit California” resources to complement outdoor recreation tourism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Collaborate with the Health and Caregiving Sector, leveraging an evidence-based holistic approach to address behavioral health (specifically for BIPOC and disability communities) through participation in arts, culture, and outdoor activities, simultaneously alleviating the shortage of mental health providers. ◆ Advocate for and ensure equitable access to resources to ensure economic resilience across the region, particularly focusing on isolated and underserved communities through mobile services and targeted outreach. ◆ Center and integrate Indigenous approaches in community-building and cultural development. ◆ Address funding gaps and extractive relationships between rural and urban arts organizations (particularly for BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ organizations) and attract more investment to rural areas by leveraging unique cultural and ecological strengths, creating a more sustainable and equitable funding environment. ◆ Promote inclusive, community-centered tourism through creative placemaking/placekeeping to boost cultural vibrancy, attract visitors, and prevent gentrification, ensuring long-term residents are not displaced. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Most industries within Arts, Culture, and Tourism have relatively moderate climate impacts (“do no harm”). ◆ Focus on regenerative approaches that align with the region’s nature and stewardship economy. ◆ Creatively educate people on the importance of preparing for and mitigating the impacts of climate-related disasters, such as wildfires and floods. ◆ Collaborative with the Working Lands Sector on climate-conscious agritourism in the areas of cannabis, wine, and niche farm products such as dairy. ◆ Join forces with the Working Lands and Renewable and Resilient Energy Sectors to invest in ecotourism—creatively educate and guide the public on responsible travel to natural areas. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Launch innovative entrepreneurship development and educational programs to enhance skills in underserved sectors, match (budding) entrepreneurs with community needs, and align educational opportunities with regional needs for workforce readiness, now and in the future. ◆ Foster a “Hope Economy” to retain and grow talent in the region, addressing higher suicide consideration and sadness reported among youth and adults compared to the state average. ◆ Address the historical weaknesses of low wages and seasonal work, particularly in tourism and hospitality, by regionally advocating for better job quality and stability. ◆ Provide more professional opportunities and infrastructure, like affordable housing, to improve job quality and access for young professionals in the region. | | |

Implementing Arts, Culture, and Tourism Strategies

Developmental Dyads

While formulating the above strategies and tactics, another model for assessing the goals and impact of each strategy was developed. This was to sort non-exhaustive clusters of strategic goals/intended results into new categories, with six categories being arranged into three dyad sets. Those dyads are listed here:

A. Physical Infrastructure - Cultural centers, maker spaces, mobile creative spaces, interpretive centers, parks, trails, training institutes, and housing.

B. Knowledge Infrastructure - Regional asset mapping, regional branding, relationship-building. Conceptual and relational infrastructure.

A. Tourism (outward facing) - Outdoor activities, cultural sites and events, and creative placemaking.

B. Community Wellbeing (inward facing) - Creating/changing infrastructure and programs to mobilize artists in their communities - mental health, social work, policy engagement, educational programs. Activating outdoor sites as locations of health and wellness. Creative placekeeping.

A. Immediate Action - Training artists in entrepreneurship, regional branding, physical infrastructure development.

B. Long Term Planning - Ongoing regional data collection, a regional praxis of data collection and research, training institutes that are expanding and opening new possibilities/connections in the sector.

Exploring these dyads also highlighted a tension within the sector analysis in the Regional Plan Part 1: To varying degrees, all aspects of these dyads are present within the general philosophy, core values and stated goals of Redwood Region RISE. However, when reading the Sector Opportunities:

Arts, Culture, and Tourism: The sector has many opportunities, including (among others) museums, theaters, and art galleries, cultural events (festivals, concerts, art exhibitions), including traditional arts and Indigenous cultural practices, and development of heritage sites. Develop culinary, cultural, eco-, experiential, and other niche brands of tourism.

While all of these represent real and worthwhile investment opportunities, they also primarily hew to the 'Type A' categories of the dyads: *Physical infrastructure*, *Tourism*, and *Direct Action*. It should not be expected for one short paragraph to be exhaustive, nonetheless we strongly encourage a 'balanced' model of sector investment, which treats the dyads as holistic, synergistic systems for development - like twinned, mutually supportive trees.

"If you can put the money into the creative core of each little community, it changes the vibration of everything."

Figure 5 Arts, Culture, and Tourism: Key Indicators of Success

Community quality of life:

- ◆ Placemaking/keeping, behavioral health, community narratives, and a new 'Hope Economy'.

Thriving live/work conditions for sector workers/participants:

- ◆ Sustainable, thriving careers readily available in the region for sector participants, with opportunities for upward mobility. Sector participants can benefit from career stability and safety nets, such as affordable health insurance.
- ◆ High levels of successful new entrepreneurship. Collaboration within the sector.
- ◆ RISE-identified projects/investments with similar or synergistic goals and strategies within the ACT Sector can find points of collaboration, build relationships, and enhance regional impact and efficiency through cooperation, viewing each other as potential collaborators rather than competitors.

Collaboration with other sectors:

- ◆ Agritourism and ecotourism are prime targets for collaboration with the Working Lands Sector. Potential collaborations with Allied Health present some of the most intriguing and compelling future possibilities in the fields of mental health, social prescription, and socio-emotional learning.

Regional impact:

- ◆ Reach: Number of communities/individuals served, with emphasis on geographical scope and impact on underserved and isolated priority communities.
- ◆ Replicability: The potential for successful pilot projects to serve as a template for similar projects throughout the region and beyond.
- ◆ Tourist visitation and hotel occupancy rates (tracked by season), patrons and guests of events and other arts and culture activities.

Environmental sustainability:

- ◆ Waste generated by tourists and event goers, the carbon footprint of travelers, and damage to natural resources through overuse or creation of new sector infrastructure is kept with sustainable bounds through careful planning and regenerative practices.

Achievability

The goals outlined in this strategic report are as broad, multi-varied, and intertwined as the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Sector itself. However, it is the opinion of the Sector Table that all are highly achievable, due to the many strengths and opportunities present within the sector and region, including:

- ◆ Deep reserves of cultural/ecological assets within the region (universities, non-profits, parks, tribes, etc.)
- ◆ The desire for strong community/regional networks, and great potential to empower them with more investment.
- ◆ Shifting state priorities and a transition to economies of hope, transformation of rural narratives, grass-roots organization, and an emphasis on mental/physical health and community well-being.

Relevance and Alignment

The Arts, Culture, and Tourism Strategic Report aligns itself with California Jobs First and Redwood Region RISE strategies in the following ways:

- ◆ The foundational approach is *data-driven and ground-truthed*. A comprehensive assessment of the sector is the bedrock for the development of future strategies and for the evaluation of sector investments. Data assessments are also intended to be on-going and iterative, staying nimble and up to date as conditions in the sector shift.
- ◆ Strategies are focused on the *resilience* of the sector. As seen in the SWOT analysis, threats to the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Sector can not only be catastrophic, but sudden and unpredictable in their onset. Building collaborative networks and pre-emptive planning for future shocks are a necessary and prudent investment in the sector.
- ◆ Strategies are focused on *collaboration and collective effort*, both within the sector itself and in cross-cutting partnerships with other regional sectors. Isolation and disinvested rural resources are weaknesses of the sector, but the proactive, creative, and entrepreneurial spirit of the sector is one of its greatest strengths. Collaborative strategies employ one to address the other.
- ◆ Strategies are focused on *stewardship and sustainability*, not extraction and exploitation. The Redwood Region's economy has been focused on resource extraction for centuries, whether timber, fish, or water. A regional shift to creative placemaking and community-led tourism has the potential to center the transformational power of culture and nature to create healthy and vibrant places to visit and live.
- ◆ Strategies are based upon the foundational question: *Are people thriving, with hope for the future?* As also seen in the SWOT analysis, the sector has historically struggled with the standard of 'high-end jobs'. Strategies centered in entrepreneurship support, industry networking, advocacy, and creation of new career pathways are all formulated with the intent of addressing living conditions and opportunities for sector professionals. Meanwhile, an emphasis on creative placemaking, community leadership, and the employment of the sector in social health and innovation are the tools by which the sector can play its part in the growth of prosperous, flourishing, and conscientious communities throughout the Redwood Region.



“The precise role of the artist, then, is to illuminate that darkness, blaze roads through that vast forest, so that we will not, in all our doing, lose sight of its purpose, which is, after all, to make the world a more human dwelling place.”

– James Baldwin



Example Projects

- ◆ A Hub that will serve as shelter and central orchestration in times of disaster and will include spaces and support for allied emergency programs, overnight lodging, environmental research and demo sites, workforce training in environmental sciences, TEK, wildfire management, construction, and other industries, bringing together both environmental and arts nonprofits.
- ◆ Creating enhanced arts, culture, and tourism experiences: Establish Redwood Region Branding as an “off-the-beaten-track” arts & culture destination and place to live, in addition to the well-known natural beauty. Align with “Visit California” branding strategies (‘North of Ordinary’) and pilot through Welcome Centers in Ukiah and Eureka for the Region.
- ◆ BIPOC Cultural Partnerships and Community Centers: Bring together key partners, BIPOC centered organizations, frontline community partners and allies to implement a local and regional research, training, workforce development, co-working, educational and cultural arts center. Foster intersectional strategies that include arts, health, agriculture, BIPOC leadership, social justice, and ecological restoration.



10 Year Timeline

Year 1

- Following the recommendation of the Sector Table and RGS, direct a sizable portion of first-year Catalyst funding (\$300k-500k) to an RFP for a comprehensive sector landscape assessment.
- Fund administrative support for on-going sector networking and advocacy, collaboratively coordinated through local arts agencies, visitor centers, and colleges.
- Direct funding to facilitate local alignments with Visit California's regional marketing plan, emphasizing not only hub communities but gateway communities and smaller, isolated communities. Coordinate this effort through Welcome Centers in Ukiah and Eureka.
- Using Catalyst funding, create a diverse portfolio of smaller (\$5k-40k) targeted investments intended to move projects and collaborative groups of projects in alignment with RISE and the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Sector's strategic goals, towards the next phase of obtaining more funding from other state, federal, or private sources.
- Concurrent with the execution of the landscape assessment, fund the creation of a sector datahub to maintain and disseminate data obtained from the landscape assessment, supplement through ongoing data-gathering and analysis, and track the success and development of Catalyst investments.

Year 2

- Comprehensive sector landscape assessment in progress.
- Continue development and implementation of the datahub. Procure additional sources of funding for ongoing operation.
- Continue to fund administrative support for on-going sector networking and advocacy. Procure additional sources of funding for future operations.
- Continue funding development of local alignments with Visit California's regional marketing plan. Procure additional sources of funding for future investment.
- Direct the most sizable portion of second-year Catalyst funding to expansion of the targeted investment portfolio.

Year 3

- Regional collaboration with Visit California, the sector network, and the datahub are all on-going.
- The datahub begins assessment of Year 1 Catalyst targeted investments. Results are reported back to the Sector Network to identify how additional assistance may be given and which strategies/projects have seen the most success.
- The datahub maintains and adds to the database created by the landscape assessment. This data is synthesized and disseminated as part of advocacy efforts, and is shared with the sector network, to assess and make recommendations on future developments in the sector.

Year 4

- Regional collaboration with Visit California, the sector network, and the datahub are all on-going.
- The datahub begins assessment of Year 2 Catalyst targeted investments. Results are reported back to the Sector Network to identify how additional assistance may be given and which strategies/projects have seen the most success.
- The datahub maintains and adds to the database created by the landscape assessment. This data is synthesized and disseminated as part of advocacy efforts, and is shared with the sector network, to assess and make recommendations on future developments in the sector.

Years 5-8

- Normal operations of regional marketing, the sector network, and the datahub continue. Check-ins with the Catalyst targeted investment portfolio continue, and annual updates on the state of the sector are issued.

Year 9

- Normal operations of regional marketing, the sector network, and the datahub continue. Check-ins with the Catalyst targeted investment portfolio continue, and annual updates on the state of the sector are issued.
- Begin major update to the landscape assessment.

Year 10

- Normal operations of regional marketing, the sector network, and the datahub continue. Check-ins with the Catalyst targeted investment portfolio continue, and annual updates on the state of the sector are issued.
- Conclude major update to the landscape assessment.

Humans of the Redwoods

Kyle on Del Norte's Ecotourism Potential, Young Adult Opportunities, and Local Naturalists Doing 'Rad Activism'

As an interpreter for Jedediah Smith State Park, Kyle Buchanan witnesses firsthand the importance of Del Norte's natural resources in the community's emotional and economic well being. As a young adult, he sees a lack of the sort of social spaces common to young adults in more populated areas, but has found a thriving naturalist community passionate about protecting Del Norte's most precious resources.

Youth In Crescent City

Kyle Buchanan first fell in love with Del Norte while on a road trip. Once he found a dream job interpreting for Jedediah Smith State Park, he left his hometown of Long Beach to move up to the much more remote Crescent City. Kyle spends his free time riding his bike, botanizing, birding, surfing, and

exploring all that Del Norte has to offer. As a young adult, he sees a lack of the sort of social spaces common to young adults in more populated areas. However, for him, it's not always about that.

"It is difficult to think about what there is in Crescent City for young people, because I feel like that's heavily embedded in what young people should be doing at a certain age. There's different forms of outdoor recreation and different forms of naturalizing in the outdoors, and sometimes that's not really perceived as a young person thing. But the young people here are all about it. And as long as people are happy, like myself, I think there's that for young people."

A Dangerous Road

The remoteness of Del Norte is a part of its appeal to Kyle, but also is a hindrance when it comes to transportation. Erosion caused by seasonal fires often leads to landslides that bottleneck the few roads in and out of Crescent City. Much of the region doesn't have reception which puts pressure on having a reliable vehicle that won't get stranded out in the backroads where Kyle often recreates.



"It's really difficult sometimes to get in and out of Crescent City. The landslides, fires, and all the construction that needs to happen afterwards definitely restricts transportation."

Ecotourism Opportunities

While its wilderness can make Del Norte difficult to navigate to and from, it's these natural resources that are the backbone of its tourism industry. Kyle sees a lot of economic potential by bolstering ecotourism opportunities like organized biking, kayaking, and backpacking tours similar to places like Moab, Utah.

"We could use more ecotourism businesses, where people really take advantage of what a beautiful area this is. I mean, we have redwoods, we have the Six Rivers National Forest, and coastal habitats just all within a 15 minute drive from each other."

[Read Kyle's full story](#)