

FROM MILL TOWN TO MAKER DISTRICT

A White Paper on the Redevelopment of the Asheville River Arts District and Transferable Lessons for an Industrial-Edge Redevelopment Agency

This document was prepared for the Bend Urban Renewal Agency, the Core Area Advisory Board, and relevant stakeholders responsible for transforming the Core Area- a light-industrial corridor into a mixed-use urban district.

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Executive Summary

- **Asheville’s River Arts District (RAD) emerged through a thirty-five-year collaboration, not a top-down approach. Artist-pioneers established the market in the 1980s and 1990s.**

RiverLink and the City formalized a long-term vision with the 1989 Asheville Riverfront Plan and the 2004 Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Master Plan. The \$35 million River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project (RADTIP), built from 2017 to 2021 and anchored by a \$14.6 million federal TIGER VI grant, transformed a neglected industrial corridor into a cohesive, multimodal urban district. [3, 5, 11, 15]

- **The key transferable lesson is the importance of sequence and pace.** Affordable rents, large floor plates, and industrial buildings initially attracted “urban pioneer” tenants. Recurring events like the Studio Stroll (founded 1994) established consistent visitation. Catalytic adaptive-reuse projects, such as Wedge Brewing (2008) and Riverview Station (2004), demonstrated mixed-use viability. The opening of New Belgium’s \$175 million East Coast brewery in 2016 signaled national investor confidence. Only after these steps did major public infrastructure investment solidify the district. Reversing this order—prioritizing infrastructure before a creative ecosystem exists—often leads to higher costs and “arts districts” lacking authentic artist presence. [1, 14, 24, 26]

- **An active freight rail corridor and a barrier-creating highway do not preclude mixed-use redevelopment** if planners: (1) embrace rail and road infrastructure as part of the district’s industrial identity; (2) invest in grade-separation engineering, as Asheville did by lowering Riverside Drive under the Norfolk Southern trestle; (3) use streetscape, greenway, wayfinding, and form-based zoning to reconnect the district at a human scale; and (4) preserve working light-industrial uses alongside arts and hospitality, rather than zoning them out. [15, 36, 38]

Key Findings

1. **The artist-led incubation phase preceded — and made possible — every later public investment.**

From 1985 onward, individual building owners (Pattiy Torno at Curve Studios in 1989, Brian and Gail McCarthy at Highwater Clays in the mid-1980s and at the Odyssey Center for Ceramic Arts in 1995, Helaine Green and Trudy Gould at what became Riverview Station in 1990/1996, John Payne acquiring the 1916 Farmers Federation building that became Wedge Studios in 2002, Jolene and Mitch Mechanic at the Phil Mechanic Building from 1999) absorbed the renovation risk on rough, large-floor-plate industrial buildings. The City did not finance these conversions; it later validated and amplified them. [1, 5, 10, 22, 30]

2. **Programming, not infrastructure, built the first audience.**

The Studio Stroll, founded by Highwater Clays at the Odyssey Center in 1994 and turned over to an artist committee in 1998, was the first reliable mechanism to bring outside visitors into a sometimes-uninviting industrial corridor. Twenty-plus years later, the stroll grew to 240-plus participating artists across two weekends a year, and the Second Saturday cadence converted episodic visitation into daily and weekly visitation patterns. [5, 22]

3. **Adaptive reuse — rather than demolition — preserved both character and price points that working artists could afford.**

The retained brick warehouses, exposed steel, freight elevators, loading docks, and tannery rooflines became the district's defining visual identity, not its constraint. Riverview Station alone preserved a 1902 Hans Rees tannery building of approximately 110,000 square feet that hosted over 60 working artists and entrepreneurs by the late 2010s. [5, 7]

4. **The Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Master Plan (adopted by Asheville City Council in 2004) was the critical “plan of plans”**

that consolidated more than twenty years of community planning into a single 17-mile vision spanning the French Broad and Swannanoa river corridors, and it provided the unifying framework against which more than a decade of subsequent capital projects, zoning actions, and grant applications could be measured. Asheville's earlier 1989 Riverfront Plan, developed with the AIA and ASLA, had already received the American Planning Association's Large Scale Planning Award —





meaning the city brought national-caliber planning credibility to the federal funding application table. [9, 11, 12]

- 5. One federal grant unlocked the entire infrastructure package.** The 2014 award of a \$14.6 million TIGER VI grant — announced by then-U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx's visit to Jean Webb Park on September 12, 2014, was the catalytic event for financing. It triggered approximately \$35 million in RADTIP construction and roughly \$50 million in bundled investment, including greenway extensions, design, acquisition, and ancillary capital. Co-funding came from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (ultimately \$7.1 million as bids came in high), NCDOT, the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund (now NC Land and Water Fund), the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, and City of Asheville bond and debt financing. An earlier 2010 TIGER II planning grant had built the technical readiness that made the 2014 capital award credible — a reminder that smaller planning grants are often the unsung enablers of large capital grants. [13, 14, 15]
- 6. Form-based zoning was used to lock in the district's character at the moment of greatest market pressure.** Asheville's River Arts District Form-Based Code, drafted by Code Studio of Austin, refined through two public-comment drafts (2016 and 2017), and ultimately adopted as part of the Unified Development Ordinance in 2017, replaced traditional use-based zoning with seven character districts that regulate building form, frontage, and street relationship rather than dictating use. The code was explicitly designed to preserve the area's industrial and art-centered atmosphere, manage the floodplain, and protect view corridors to the river while still permitting redevelopment. [16, 17]
- 7. Anchor breweries — not condominiums — provided the third-place placemaking layer.** Wedge Brewing Company opened in the Farmers Federation building in 2008 in a dirt parking lot down by the rail tracks and was, for years, the district's only large evening gathering place. New Belgium Brewing's selection of an 18-acre brownfield (a former auto junkyard and the Western North Carolina Livestock Co. auction site) on the west side of the river, with the \$175 million facility opening in May 2016 at a planned 500,000-barrel annual capacity, was the single most credibility-shifting private investment in the district's history. At the April 5, 2012, Asheville Chamber press conference, New Belgium CEO Kim Jordan said: "From the deep sense of community to the rich natural environment and the opportunity to revitalize a brownfield site near a vibrant downtown, Asheville has everything we've been looking for." Local food-and-beverage businesses (12 Bones Smokehouse, made nationally famous by three Obama visits; Bull and Beggar; White Duck Taco; All Souls Pizza; Vivian; The Junction) are layered between artist anchors and breweries to create a viable seven-day-a-week economy. [18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27]



8. Governance was federated, not unitary. No single entity “ran” the RAD. The artist nonprofit River Arts District Artists, Inc. (RADA, formally incorporated in 2013, ~300 active members and over 700 affiliated artists by 2024), the River Arts District Business Association (RADBA), RiverLink (the regional watershed nonprofit founded in 1987), the Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission (a joint city–private board formed in 2010), the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, the City of Asheville’s Planning and Urban Design Department, and the NCDOT each owned a distinct slice of the work. A “RAD Vitality Partnership” — coordinated monthly meetings of RADA, RADBA, and City staff during RADTIP construction, supported by a \$25,000 City-designated business-assistance fund — formalized this coordination during the most disruptive period. In February 2026, USA Today’s 10Best Readers’ Choice Awards named the River Arts District the #1 arts district in the United States, ahead of arts districts in Dallas, Cleveland, and elsewhere — an external validation of this distributed governance model. [5, 9, 31, 33, 41]

Details

1. Historical Context: Why the District Existed Where It Did

The corridor that became the River Arts District was shaped by two nineteenth-century infrastructures: the river and the railroad. The Western North Carolina Railroad reached Asheville in October 1880, built in large part by leased convict labor. Within a generation, the flat, even ground between the railroad and the river had become Asheville’s first industrial zone. [2, 5]

The Asheville Cotton Mill, built in 1887 by C.E. Graham, was the fifth large factory in the area. By June 1889, it was producing approximately 15,000 yards of plaid each day, and at its peak, it employed more than 300 people. Moses and Caesar Cone took over in 1893, renamed it Asheville Cotton Mills, and later supplied cotton to Levi Strauss and uniform fabric to U.S. soldiers in both World Wars. The mill closed in 1953 and stood empty for forty years; the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County acquired the complex from Clyde Savings Bank in 1993, but most of the 122,000-square-foot building burned in an April 1995 fire later determined to be arson. [5]



Adjacent to the cotton mill complex were the Hans Rees & Sons tanneries, which in 1898 built thirty buildings on twenty-two acres and processed roughly 30,000 pounds of cattle hide per day to produce leather drive belts for industrial machinery — at the time, one of the largest tanneries in the country. The Farmers Federation agricultural cooperative built a brick warehouse complex in 1916. The Western Carolina Livestock Co. operated a stockyard and auction across the river. The National Biscuit Company arrived in 1907, an Armor meat-packing plant in 1910, and ice houses, furniture factories, and shoe factories filled in the remainder of the corridor. [5, 6]

Two events ended this industrial peak. The Great Flood of 1916 destroyed much of the rail and warehouse infrastructure and drove many industries to higher ground; the second was the long mid-twentieth-century decline of Southern textiles and small-scale manufacturing. By the 1970s, the corridor was a half-derelict zone of empty warehouses, surface parking, junkyards, salvage operations, and informal dumping.

Transferable Observation

Light-industrial districts on rail/highway corridors are almost always the product of a specific transportation-era logic. When that logic dies, the corridor becomes “stranded land” — too large a floor plate for residential reuse, too gritty for retail, but exactly the right shape for artists, makers, fabricators, and small-batch food and beverage producers. A redevelopment agency’s first analytical task is to read its corridor’s transportation history and identify which industrial “bones” — building floor plates, freight rail spurs, loading docks, ceiling heights, electrical service — can be re-monetized.

2. The Artist Pioneers and Early Adaptive Reuse

Asheville’s downtown revival of the late 1970s pushed rents up; artists looking for affordable studio space next looked to the empty buildings along the river. Clays — Brian and Gail McCarthy’s clay and ceramics supply business, founded in 1979 on the Swannanoa River and now occupying a 40,000-square-foot space at 600 Riverside Drive, relocated to Lyman Street in the mid-1980s and is generally cited as the first artist-related business in the corridor. In 1987, Porge and Peter Buck opened Warehouse Studios and



called its tenants “the river avant-garde”; in 1992, RiverLink purchased the Warehouse Studios building for offices and artist studios. [5, 22]

The 1989–2003 phase produced the buildings still considered the district’s anchors:

Curve Studios & Garden. Clothing designer Pattiy Torno bought the three Standard Oil Company distribution buildings (circa 1916) at 6–12 Riverside Drive on October 13, 1989. She initially opened a punk-rock all-ages club called Squash Pile (1990–1991), then renovated the buildings — replacing roofs, plumbing, electrical, and windows — into live/work studios. After the 2004 flood, she converted them to retail-plus-working-studio space, and in 2005, she successfully advocated to the City for the official “River Arts District” naming. Her storefront retail-meets-studio model became the template imitated across the district. [1]

Riverview Station. Helaine Green and her sister Trudy Gould rented space in a 1902 Hans Rees tannery building in 1990, purchased it in 1996 for their candle business, and in 2004 rebranded it as Riverview Station, ultimately converting roughly 110,000 square feet into more than 100 working studio spaces. [7]

Wedge Studios. Metal sculptor John Payne purchased the 1916 Farmers Federation Agricultural Cooperative building in 2002, installed his “Kinetosaurs” metal sculpture studio, and leased the remaining floors as artist studios. Wedge Brewing Company, founded by his children and partners in 2008 in the building’s lower level, became the district’s gravitational evening anchor. A second Wedge location (“Wedge at Foundation”) later opened in the Foundation complex. [20, 21]

Cotton Mill Studios. Ceramic artists Marty and Eileen Black acquired the surviving 1887 Asheville Cotton Mill complex in 2003 and converted it into studios. [5]



Phil Mechanic Studios. Jolene and Mitch Mechanic inherited the former Pearce-Young-Angel Co. food-distribution warehouse at 109 Roberts Street from Mitch’s father, Phil, in 1999 — meat hooks still dangling from the ceiling, walk-in refrigerator doors in place — and over six years built it out into seventeen artist studios, two galleries, and the nonprofit Flood Gallery & Fine Art Center. Jolene Mechanic became one of the district’s most public arts advocates before the building was sold in 2016 to a San Antonio investor. [30, 31, 32]

Odyssey Center for Ceramic Arts. Acquired by the McCarthys in 1995 as a ceramics teaching and rental-studio space, it became (and remains) a major training ground for early-career ceramic artists nationwide. [22]

Transferable Observation

Every one of these conversions was undertaken by a private property owner or artist-developer using personal capital, sweat equity, and minimal-to-zero public subsidy. The City's principal early contributions were permissive zoning (industrial-zoned parcels where studio use was allowed as a light industrial use) and tolerance for the unpolished aesthetic. Redevelopment agencies should resist the impulse to mandate finished, code-compliant build-outs at the pioneer stage; the gritty, partial, evolving quality is itself the market signal.

3. The Formation of the "River Arts District" Identity

For more than a decade, the corridor had no shared name. Tenants referred to "the river," "the warehouses," "Lyman Street," or "down by the tracks." The 1994 Studio Stroll, organized at the Odyssey Center, used the placeholder name "River District Artists." Highwater Clays funded and organized the stroll for its first four years before turning it over to a volunteer artist committee in 1998.

The branding moment came in 2005, when Pattiy Torno, working with neighboring artists, friendly building owners, and city and county government, successfully advocated that the City formally adopt "River Arts District" as the name of the mile-long stretch. The City's planning department designated the area; the artist organization rebranded as River Arts District Artists; and, in 2013, those approximately 80 artists incorporated as the nonprofit River Arts District Artists, Inc. (RADA), now with over 300 active members and an affiliated community of more than 700 artists. [1, 5]



In parallel, RiverLink — founded in 1987 specifically to advocate for the French Broad River — operated as the district's institutional memory and political backbone. RiverLink commissioned the original 1989 Asheville Riverfront Plan (developed in partnership with the AIA and ASLA, awarded the American Planning Association's Large Scale Planning Award), accepted the 1991 donation of two miles of west-bank riverfront from Carolina Power & Light Company that became the first link of the urban greenway, and effectively functioned as a land trust and conservation-easement holder for parcels critical to the long-term vision. [9, 11, 12]



Transferable Observation

A district needs a name, an entity to defend that name, and a recurring public event before it needs a master plan. Allow the name to emerge from the community of practitioners; do not impose a marketing consultant brand. The naming and incorporation of RADA was the moment the district acquired the standing to speak with one voice to a city council, a transportation department, and a federal funder.

4. City-Led Master Planning

Three planning documents shaped the modern district. The first was the **1989 Asheville Riverfront Plan** (RiverLink/AIA/ASLA), which consolidated community planning around a 17-mile river corridor concept and won the APA Large Scale Planning Award. The second was the **Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Master Plan**, adopted by the Asheville City Council in 2004 and named for the Appalachian writer and conservationist, whose 1955 book, *The French Broad*, had argued for linking economic development with environmental protection. The Dykeman plan provided richer site planning, a road-alignment study, and a market analysis demonstrating that revitalization could reinforce traditional industries such as health and wellness, recreation, arts, crafts, and entrepreneurship. The third was the **2017 River Arts District Form-Based Code**, which translated the master plan’s character vision into binding zoning regulation by dividing the district into seven character zones based on corridor position and mix-of-use potential. [11, 12, 16, 17]

Two adjacent plans matter for the purposes of this paper. The “East of the Riverway” plan addressed multimodal connections from the district into adjacent historically underinvested neighborhoods (Southside, Hillcrest, the West End / Clingman Avenue Neighborhood, or WECAN). The Asheville In Motion (AIM) multimodal plan and the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization’s regional planning provided the institutional connective tissue between the City, NCDOT, and federal funders.

Transferable Observation

Plans matter less for their internal content than for the standing they confer in grant competitions. The reason Asheville won the 2014 TIGER VI grant is that the City could point to a quarter-century of cumulative, adopted, award-winning planning documents covering the same corridor. The corollary: a redevelopment agency that “starts a planning process” from scratch in year one will not be competitive for major federal infrastructure grants until year five or later. Buy or earn standing by adopting predecessor plans, partnering with existing nonprofits, and treating plans as cumulative rather than episodic.



5. ***RADTIP and Public Infrastructure: The Catalytic Capital Project***

The River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project was the most ambitious single public-works project in the district's modern history. Its scope, as completed at the 2021 grand opening, included:

- **2.2 miles** of rebuilt and reconstructed roadway along Riverside Drive and Lyman Street;
- **Two miles** of new Wilma Dykeman Greenway (a fully accessible, two-way protected bicycle facility — the first in Asheville with lighting for nighttime use and the first with a public boat ramp, at Craven Street Park);
- **Two newly constructed stormwater wetlands** and approximately two miles of associated stormwater management infrastructure;
- **Nine acres of new parkland**, including expansions at Jean Webb Park and Craven Street Park;
- **Approximately 200 new public parking spaces**;
- **Hardened and upgraded electrical transmission** across the project area;
- **Conversion of a confusing five-legged intersection** at the convergence of Lyman, Depot, Roberts, and Clingman ("Five Points") into a roundabout;
- **A second roundabout** at the Lyman / Riverside Drive curve, where the original 12 Bones Smokehouse stood (the restaurant relocated to 5 Foundy Street);
- **Lowering of Riverside Drive beneath the Norfolk Southern railroad trestle** to provide horizontal and vertical clearance for the truck traffic generated by New Belgium Brewing (Norfolk Southern would not permit raising the bridge);
- **Five permanent public-art commissions** under the City's 1% for Public Art policy. [14, 15, 28, 38]

Funding stack (the most replicable feature of the project for other agencies):

- **\$14.6 million** federal TIGER VI grant (USDOT, announced September 12, 2014; the precursor 2010 TIGER II planning grant had built design and environmental readiness);
- **\$7.1 million** from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority's Tourism Product Development Fund (initially \$2.5 million, supplemented by approximately \$4.6 million more in 2017 when bids came in over budget);
- **NCDOT** funding under the STP-DA program (initially earmarked at approximately \$5 million through the French Broad River MPO);
- **NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund** (now NC Land and Water Fund);
- **NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund**



- **City of Asheville general fund and bond financing** (the City’s contribution was the largest single share, supplemented in 2016 by a \$74 million general obligation bond package that included transportation, housing, and parks components);
- **\$500,000** from the Tourism Product Development Fund (2018) specifically for the Asheville Black Cultural Heritage Trail. [13, 14, 15, 23, 40]

Timeline (the most cautionary feature of the project):

- **2010:** TIGER II planning grant received; City staff begins technical work.
- **January 2013:** City Council requests RADTIP study.
- **January 2014:** CDM Smith awarded \$2.2 million Phase Two design contract.
- **September 2014:** TIGER VI grant announced.
- **2015:** City Council approves project; right-of-way acquisition begins.
- **2016–2017:** Bid packages come in over budget; TDA supplements funding; several scope elements (Bacoate Branch Greenway, Town Branch Greenway, French Broad River Greenway extensions) are pulled from the immediate scope to fit the budget.
- **August 2017:** Construction groundbreaking; demolition of the original 12 Bones building, the Anders Tobacco Warehouse, and other acquired properties begins.
- **2018–2020:** Active construction. The most disruptive single sub-project was the multi-month lowering of Riverside Drive beneath the Norfolk Southern trestle, which required 24/7 single-lane closures for at least six weeks.
- **2021 (Earth Day to May 20, the birthday of Wilma Dykeman):** Grand opening; Wilma Dykeman Greenway officially named after a public vote.

Total project cost. The City of Asheville’s published figure for the RADTIP construction contract is approximately **\$35 million**; broader bundled investment incorporating land acquisition, design, related greenway extensions, and ancillary capital is reported in retrospective summaries at approximately **\$50 million**. Both numbers are defensible; the difference reflects scope definition. From planning the launch (2010) to the ribbon-cutting (2021), the project took approximately 11 years. [14, 15]

Transferable Observation

A federal capital grant of roughly \$15 million can credibly leverage three to four times that amount in state, county, and local match if a sufficiently mature planning record exists. Underbudget bid acceptance is a common pathology of mid-decade construction inflation; agencies should plan for a 20–30 percent bid overrun contingency and identify in advance which scope items can be deferred without unraveling federal compliance. The federal TIGER (now BUILD/RAISE) program rewards “ladder of opportunity”

framing—the explicit linkage of physical infrastructure to economic mobility for adjacent low-income and underserved neighborhoods —as Secretary Foxx emphasized at the 2014 announcement. [13]

6. Adaptive Reuse as Preservation of Industrial Character

Asheville’s most distinctive choice was *not* to demolish and rebuild. The RAD’s catalytic projects almost all began as preservation acts. Wedge Studios / Wedge Brewing Company occupies a 1916 brick Farmers Federation warehouse converted into more than thirty independent studios over three floors, with a ground-floor brewery (opened 2008) that became the prototype for “drink at a working studio building” placemaking. Riverview Station preserved a 1902 Hans Rees tannery, making it one of the largest single concentrations of working studios in the United States. All Studios used the surviving portion of the 1887 Asheville Cotton Mill. The Phil Mechanic Studios converted a 1928 Pearce-Young-Angel Co. food-distribution building. Curve Studios converted three 1916 Standard Oil distribution buildings (originally completely uninsulated, with one toilet straight-piped into the French Broad River). Pink Dog Creative, the Foundation Studios complex, Foundation Woodworks, and Marquee all occupy former tannery,



Source: RADA Foundation

warehouse, or industrial-storage structures, generally retaining brick exteriors, exposed steel, and industrial-scale floor plates. The Junction Restaurant is set in a converted industrial building near the Five Points intersection. [1, 5, 7, 20, 30]

Across the river, New Belgium Brewing’s East Coast Brewery is in many ways the most ambitious adaptive-reuse

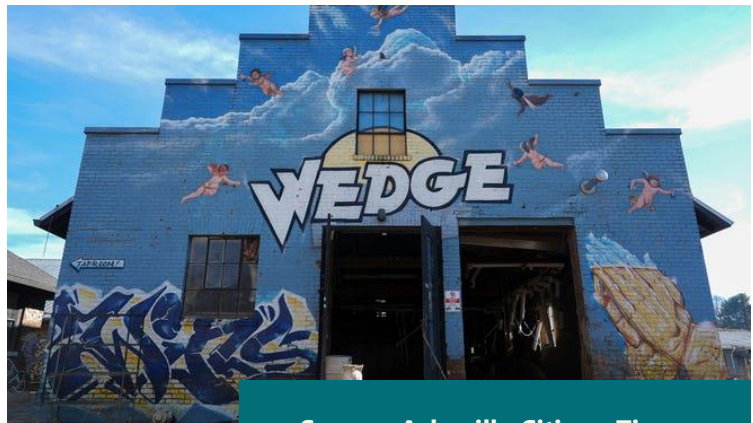
project of all: an 18-acre brownfield redevelopment (former auto junkyard and the Western North Carolina Livestock Co. auction site) designed by Perkins+Will. Approximately 14 linear miles of wood and metal salvaged from the existing site were reused on-site (the Liquid Center tasting room features bars, tables, and chairs fabricated from this material by a local artisan across the river); approximately 90 percent of brewery artwork was commissioned from artists within a three-mile radius. The project achieved LEED certification on the brewery, distribution center, and tasting room, and raised portions of the site by approximately 10 feet to clear the floodplain. The \$175 million facility opened in May 2016 with a planned annual capacity of 500,000 barrels and anticipated visitation of upwards of 200,000 annually. [24, 25, 26, 27, 28]

Transferable Observation

*Adaptive reuse achieves three things simultaneously that new construction cannot: it preserves the visual evidence of authentic industrial heritage (which is the district’s marketing asset); it produces below-market floor plates because shell-and-core renovation is cheaper than ground-up construction; and it sustains historic-preservation eligibility for tax credits. The pattern to copy is **successive owner-driven conversion** — the same building changes hands or programs three or four times over twenty years, each time accreting more value without ever being fully demolished.*

7. Breweries and Food-Beverage as Third-Place Placemaking

A craft-beverage anchor strategy was central to the RAD’s transformation from a daytime artist district into a seven-day, day-and-evening destination. The first move was Wedge Brewing Company’s 2008 opening in the Wedge Studios building — a beer garden in a dirt parking lot beside the rail tracks, with rotating food trucks and outdoor seating. The second was New Belgium’s site selection in 2012 and 2016 opening of the 500,000-barrel East Coast brewery on the west bank of the river — a project that the Asheville Area Chamber of



Source: Asheville Citizen-Times

Commerce reports was the result of a national site search by a hired firm against 33 criteria, including water quality, progressive community climate, central walk/bike-able siting, and access to interstate highways. [20, 24, 26]

Around these anchors, smaller operators clustered: Wedge at Foundation (second Wedge location), The Bull and Beggar (industrial-revamp European bistro), Bottle Riot, White Duck Taco Shop, Vivian, 12 Bones Smokehouse, All Souls Pizza, Baby Bull, RosaBees, Hi-Wire Brewing, Pleb Urban Winery, Daidala Ciders, Ginger’s Revenge, the Salvage Station live-music venue, and food trucks rotating in the parking lots of both Wedge and New Belgium.

Transferable Observation

Craft beverage operators specifically value the same attributes that working artists do: cheap rent, large flexible floor plates, three-phase power, freight-elevator-accessible loading, and tolerance for industrial activity (noise, deliveries, fermentation odors). A redevelopment agency that wants to mix arts and beverages should preserve those building attributes; converting industrial buildings to “Class A office” finishes destroys the value for both populations. A single national craft-brewery anchor (the New Belgium



*analog) tends to do more for district credibility than ten boutique tenants, but should not be the **first** anchor; cf. the sequence above.*

8. Programming and Events

The RAD’s programming calendar evolved from a single event into a continuous schedule: the **Studio Stroll** (1994–present, two weekends a year, now 240-plus artists across more than 25 buildings); **Second Saturday** monthly studio walks featuring demonstrations, workshops, live music, and wine tastings; **free trolley service** during major events; **live music** at Wedge Brewing, New Belgium, the Salvage Station, and The Grey Eagle; **Friday night live music at New Belgium** (“Fat Tire Friday,” April through October); **Saturday Art Markets** in the Upper RAD; and the pop-up “Uncommon Market.” [5, 22, 29]

Transferable Observation

Recurring, dependable, branded events — not one-off festivals — build the muscle memory that turns a district into a destination. Two weekend events per year are enough to seed a place identity; a monthly cadence converts identity into habit. Programming should be artist-led and protected from over-curation by tourism marketing organizations, because authenticity is the asset on sale.

9. Industrial Heritage and Architectural Character

The RAD’s visual identity rests on five elements: (1) retained brick warehouse walls, exposed steel trusses, freight elevators, and loading docks; (2) a robust mural and street-art inventory concentrated along Foundy Street and the Foundation Walls project; (3) adaptive reuse rather than demolition as the default development pattern; (4) the continued visible presence of working light-industrial uses (Highwater Clays, Foundation Woodworks, metal fabricators, and tradespeople) alongside arts uses; and (5) the unbroken visual and operational presence of the Norfolk Southern freight rail corridor running through the heart of the district.

The City reinforced this character through a 1% for Public Art policy that funded five permanent public-art commissions tied to RADTIP: **“Viewpoint”** (a metal-cut-out quote installation along the greenway), **“Playful Art”** (an interactive sculpture south of the 13 Bones pedestrian bridge), **“Park Gateway”** (entrance treatment for Jean Webb Park), **“Murals”** (on the abutments of the Jeff Bowen / Smoky Park Highway bridge and the Haywood Road bridge), and **“Swings”** (large artistic metal-cutout swing structures fabricated through partnership with the UNC Asheville STEAM Studio). [29, 33, 34]

Additional public-art commissions include the **“Soul Singin’”** poetry installation on the 13 Bones pedestrian bridge — a poem by local artist Cleaster Cotton, rendered as an aluminum cut-out by UNC Asheville’s STEAM Studio, the first installment of the Poetry Pathways project, funded by the Asheville Area Arts Council. The **“Big Fish”** metal sculpture by local artist David Earl Tomlinson at Jean Webb Park



is paired with Asheville GreenWorks' Trash Trout water-quality program. A **larger-than-life sprocket** sculpture along the Wilma Dykeman Greenway sits near the 13 Bones pedestrian bridge. [33, 34]

The **Foundation Walls** project converted what had previously been targeted by the City's anti-graffiti program ("1-2-3 Graffiti Free," launched 2015) into a sanctioned, ongoing mural ecosystem, with prominent works by Jerkface (the "Fender Bender" mural mashing Homer Simpson with Futurama's Bender), Gus Cutty, Ian Wilkinson (the "Good Vibes" / "Stay Weird" silo), Jerry Cahill, and Ian Brownlee, among others. [35]

Transferable Observation

Mural programs work best when they are formalized partnerships between the City, building owners, and artists rather than enforcement-driven anti-graffiti programs. The shift from "1-2-3 Graffiti Free" to Foundation Walls represented a policy reversal that has paid significant dividends in the district's photographic and tourism appeal.

10. The Rail and Highway Challenges

The active freight rail corridor bisecting the district was the single largest physical-planning constraint and is the issue with the highest transfer value to similarly situated districts.

The active freight rail line. The Norfolk Southern line (the former Southern Railway, in continuous freight service since 1880) runs roughly parallel to the river through the district and crosses Riverside Drive at multiple at-grade crossings, as well as via the double-arched railroad trestle bridge, which became a defining element of the district. [2, 36]

Pedestrian-rail and vehicle-rail conflicts. RADTIP addressed these in three ways. First, the City was unable to raise the trestle bridge — railroad-engineering politics rarely permit raising an active main-line bridge — so the design team instead **lowered Riverside Drive by approximately two feet beneath the trestle**, a structurally permissible solution validated by auger borings, executed with Norfolk Southern's permission, and accomplished through a multi-week 24/7 single-lane closure. Second, RADTIP improved sight lines, signals, and signage at at-grade railroad crossings within the project area, with a separate (Norfolk Southern-led, non-RADTIP) one-day crossing-surface upgrade at the Riverside Drive crossing near 464 Riverside Drive. Third, the new Wilma Dykeman Greenway was routed primarily on the riverside of the rail line, minimizing the number of pedestrian rail crossings. [15, 36, 37]

Noise, vibration, and operational impacts. No federal Railroad Administration Quiet Zone was established within RADTIP; freight horns continue to sound at at-grade crossings. The available evidence suggests no formal Quiet Zone was sought, likely because the relatively short, irregular freight cadence on this branch line did not produce a sufficient community-benefit case, and because the cost of supplementary safety measures (four-quadrant gates, medians, or wayside horns) required for Quiet Zone designation typically falls on the local jurisdiction. Districts contemplating Quiet Zones should plan carefully on cost. According to the FRA’s Guide to the Quiet Zone Establishment Process, costs



can vary from \$30,000 per crossing to more; civil-engineering firm Snyder & Associates reports that four-quadrant-gate installations commonly average more than \$250,000 per crossing; and at some corridors (e.g., the 2021 City of Carroll, Iowa Union Pacific Quiet Zone Investigation) installations have exceeded \$1,000,000 per crossing. Engage the railroad and the FRA at least three to five years before designation. [38, 39, 42]

Highway access. The district is bracketed by Interstate 240 to the north and is accessed via Riverside Drive, Lyman Street, Haywood Road, Amboy Road, and Clingman Avenue. The Five Points intersection (Lyman / Depot / Roberts / Clingman) — a five-legged convergence that previously caused frequent confusion and pedestrian-safety incidents — was reconstructed as a roundabout under RADTIP, becoming the district’s principal multimodal interface point. A second roundabout at the Lyman / Riverside curve smoothed the previous 90-degree blind curve. [15]

Truck access for industrial tenants. The RADTIP lowering of Riverside Drive beneath the trestle was explicitly engineered to accommodate the truck volume generated by New Belgium Brewing’s 500,000-barrel-capacity brewery, demonstrating that arts districts and light-industrial truck routing can coexist when the design team treats freight access as a first-order constraint rather than an afterthought. [25, 36]

Transferable Observations

An active freight rail corridor through a district is not a defect to be hidden but an identity element to be embraced. The visual presence of trains, the rhythm of crossing signals, and the industrial-era trestle bridge are integral to the district’s authenticity. Engineering relationships with the freight railroad are slow, expensive, and asymmetrical: plan a five-year horizon for any project that requires the railroad’s affirmative cooperation; never assume bridge raising is feasible; design for road lowering, road widening



at the abutments, or grade-separation alternatives instead. Roundabouts at confusing legacy industrial-era intersections are disproportionately high-value: they slow traffic without stopping it, accommodate trucks, simplify the pedestrian crossing geometry, and create a natural site for landmark public art. Quiet Zone designation is a multi-year, multi-million-dollar undertaking; districts should make that decision early, not as a reactive response to resident complaints once residential uses appear.

11. Governance Structure

The RAD’s governance pattern is best described as **federated, multi-stakeholder, and informally coordinated**. The principal entities are River Arts District Artists, Inc. (RADA — artist-led 501(c)(3), incorporated 2013, ~300 dues-paying members representing an affiliated community of more than 700 artists, owner of the brand, the website, the Studio Stroll, and the public voice of the artists); the River Arts District Business Association (RADBA — business-led counterpart, focused on retail, hospitality, and property-owner concerns); RiverLink (watershed-conservation nonprofit founded in 1987, institutional carrier of the long-range planning vision, holds conservation easements, advocates with City Council and state agencies); the Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission (AARRC — joint city and private-sector advisory board formed in 2010, functions as the public-facing project review body for RAD-related capital projects); the City of Asheville Department of Planning and Urban Design (owner of master plans, the form-based code, RADTIP construction administration, and 1% for Public Art commissioning — staff continuity over a decade, particularly under Riverfront Coordinator and Riverfront Redevelopment Office Director Stephanie Monson Dahl, was material to the project’s success); the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority / Explore Asheville (funder via the Tourism Product Development Fund, contributed \$7.1 million to RADTIP); NCDOT and the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (state-funded transportation programming and the regional MPO coordination of federal funding); and adjacent neighborhood associations including the West End / Clingman Avenue Neighborhood (WECAN), which participated formally in plan reviews. [9, 11, 12, 13, 23]

The most important coordinating mechanism during peak disruption was the **RAD Vitality Partnership** — a recurring set of meetings among RADA, RADBA, and the City, supported by a \$25,000 City-designated fund for business-continuity grants during RADTIP construction. The partnership delivered the 114 RAD wayfinding pole-banner signs (designed by artist and graphic designer Andrea Kulish, funded with more than \$24,000 in business contributions) that maintained navigability during construction and later informed the permanent wayfinding system. [41, 44]

Transferable Observation

A successful redevelopment district needs at minimum two community-side organizations (one for working tenants/makers, one for property owners/businesses), one watershed-or corridor-focused conservation nonprofit, one quasi-public commission that bridges to City Council, and a single full-time, named staff member in the City’s planning department whose career arc maps onto the project’s arc.

12. Economic Development Outcomes

By 2024, the RAD encompassed approximately 23 buildings on a roughly two-square-mile footprint, housing some 300 RADA members and an affiliated community of more than 700 artists. According to the 2023 Asheville and Buncombe County Tourism Economic Impact Report, conducted by Tourism Economics (an Oxford Economics company) for Explore Asheville and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority and released August 13, 2024, the county welcomed **13.9 million visitors in**



Source: Our State Magazine

2023, who spent **\$2.97 billion** directly (a 3 percent increase over 2022), generating a **total economic impact of \$4.3 billion**. The same report indicates visitor spending supported **29,148 jobs in 2023, one of every seven jobs in the County,**

and generated \$265 million in state and local taxes. The report ranks Buncombe County as the third-largest visitor economy in the state. [45, 46, 47, 48]

RAD-building property values increased 30–50 percent between 2017 and 2021. The RAD was instrumental in pulling Asheville’s brand from “Beer City USA” toward a broader “creative economy” positioning. In February 2026, USA Today’s 10Best Readers’ Choice Awards named the River Arts District the **#1 arts district in the United States**, an external recognition that came during ongoing recovery from a 2024 natural-hazard event affecting the district. [41]

13. Successes

The successes of the RAD redevelopment that are most readily transferable include the successful capture of a \$14.6 million federal TIGER VI grant against national competition; the completion of an approximately 11-year, multi-source, ~\$35–50 million capital project (RADTIP) without losing the federal funding obligation despite mid-project bid overruns; the delivery of nine acres of new parkland, two miles of fully-accessible greenway, and 200 parking spaces while maintaining studio access throughout construction; the USA Today #1 ranking (2026); the successful integration of public art (the 13 Bones pedestrian bridge poetry installation by Cleaster Cotton, the Big Fish sculpture by David Earl Tomlinson, the Wilma Dykeman Greenway sprocket, the Foundation Walls program) directly into transportation infrastructure; a self-sustaining recurring-events economy with the Studio Stroll exceeding three decades of operation; a form-



based code (2017) that locked in character protections at the moment of greatest market pressure; and the successful recruitment of New Belgium Brewing — a credibility-validating national private investment of \$175 million — to a brownfield site adjacent to the district. [13, 14, 15, 16, 22, 26, 33, 41]

14. Lessons Learned

Long planning and construction timelines. Approximately eleven years from planning launch (2010 TIGER II) to ribbon-cutting (2021), with substantial mid-project disruption. Working artists and businesses inside the RADTIP footprint endured several years of road closures, utility relocations, demolition of acquired properties, dust, noise, and temporary access changes. The City’s mitigation tools — the RAD Vitality Partnership, wayfinding pole banners, the \$25,000 business-assistance fund — were essential but, by the City’s and businesses’ own accounts, modest relative to the duration of the disruption. [41, 44]

Phasing and scope-contraction tensions. When 2016–2017 construction bids came in higher than budget, several scope items were pulled or deferred: the Bacoate Branch (formerly Clingman Forest) Greenway, the Town Branch Greenway, portions of the French Broad River Greenway extensions, and, most controversially, the Livingston Street pedestrian-safety improvements adjacent to the historically underserved Southside neighborhood. The local press and neighborhood organizations criticized this as red-lining the project’s benefits toward the more visible RAD frontage. The lesson: scope-reduction decisions in federally funded projects must be made transparently, at the table, not as emergency, staff-level budget management.

nent domain and right-of-way acquisition. Approximately several dozen property owners along the 2.2-mile RADTIP corridor received “your property will likely be directly impacted” letters in May 2015. The original 12 Bones Smokehouse (whose owner was a former vice-mayor) was displaced. Property acquisition was contracted to a third-party land-acquisition vendor (Gulf Coast LLC). Several owners contested appraisals as “low ball” and engaged attorneys; the City’s relationship with property owners in this period was the most adversarial of the project. The lesson: budget for negotiated above-appraisal acquisition where critical properties are involved; build property-owner advisory committees into the design phase before letters of impact are sent; and prefer voluntary buyer-willing-seller acquisition over takings whenever feasible. [49, 50]

Coordination across multiple agencies and funding sources. The project involved the City, NCDOT, FHWA, the MPO, Norfolk Southern, FEMA (for floodplain coordination), the TDA, two state trust funds, and multiple state environmental and parks agencies. The matching-fund and federal-obligation deadlines (June 30, 2016, funding-obligation deadline; September 30, 2016, pre-construction-complete deadline; September 30, 2021, funds-expenditure deadline) created a sometimes-unhealthy speed pressure that contributed to the controversial scope reductions described above. The lesson: a dedicated project manager and a co-located inter-agency staff group, with weekly standing meetings, is essential during the obligation window. [15, 23]



Tensions between the gritty artist character and the incoming commercial development. As property values rose 30–50 percent between 2017 and 2021, several anchor buildings changed hands to out-of-region institutional investors (the Phil Mechanic Building’s 2016 sale to a San Antonio investor and 2020 sale to Atlanta-based Hatteras Sky; Riverview Station’s later acquisition by GBX Group; Curve Studios’ acquisition by Burial Beer Co.). Artists’ rents and tenure security became increasingly volatile. While outside the scope of this paper, agencies should recognize that the *physical* success of a redevelopment project will tend to *destabilize* the original creative-class tenants who created its value unless commercial-rent-stabilization mechanisms (long-term leases to artist co-ops, community land trusts on key buildings, or arts-focused TIF mechanisms) are deployed early. [30, 31, 32]

Brand stewardship. As the district grew, multiple commercial actors (real estate marketers, tour operators, short-term rental platforms) began using “RAD” branding without coordinating with RADA. The RAD Vitality Partnership wayfinding banners were a useful counter-measure, but brand stewardship remains an ongoing challenge.

Wayfinding and parking. Even after RADTIP added ~200 spaces, parking remains a chronic issue, particularly during Studio Stroll weekends, and not all streets have continuous sidewalks. The district’s success has, paradoxically, made it harder to navigate by car.

Operational rail corridor challenges. Beyond the trestle-bridge clearance issue addressed by RADTIP, ongoing freight rail noise, vibration, and the lack of a formal Quiet Zone remain operational frictions for the few buildings that have introduced residential or hospitality uses.

15. Opportunities and the Path Forward

As of mid-2026, the RAD’s path forward includes the maturation of the form-based code in operation, with a multi-year track record now available to inform amendments; the potential return of passenger rail service to Asheville (the proposed Western North Carolina Passenger Rail Corridor, which would create the possibility of an Amtrak station within the district); continued buildout of greenway connections northward (the Wilma Dykeman Greenway Extension to Pearson Bridge Road, coordinated by NCDOT and the City) and southward to the Hominy Creek system; the maturation of the RAD Creative Campus concept announced in early 2026 by the RADA Foundation as a permanent, flood-safe cultural anchor on Lyman Street; and continued integration with adjacent districts (downtown Asheville, the South Slope brewing district, West Asheville). [51]

Recommendations

The Asheville RAD case yields a set of staged, sequenced recommendations transferable to other light-industrial redevelopment contexts, particularly districts characterized by an active freight rail corridor, a primary highway, and a working-industrial-to-arts/maker transition.



Stage 1 (Years 1–3): Establish Standing and Protect the Pioneers

1. **Inventory the industrial assets.** Catalog floor plates, ceiling heights, freight-elevator capacity, three-phase electrical service, loading-dock access, and rail-spur access for every building in the district. This catalog is the agency's principal economic-development tool.
2. **Adopt a plan, but more importantly, adopt a planning lineage.** If predecessor plans exist (open-space plans, transportation plans, watershed plans, downtown plans), formally incorporate them by reference into a new master plan. Standing in federal grant competitions is cumulative; do not start from zero.
3. **Do not zone out the working tenants.** The agency's first zoning move should be to confirm that artist studios, light manufacturing, food-and-beverage production, and similar uses remain by-right in the existing industrial zoning. Defer regulatory tightening (form-based codes, design review) until a critical mass of pioneer tenants is in place.
4. **Underwrite recurring programming, not one-off festivals.** A modest annual operating subsidy (\$25,000–\$100,000) to an artist- or maker-led organization that runs a recurring monthly or seasonal open-studio event will, over five years, do more for the district than a single signature festival of equivalent cost.
5. **Form the citizen advisory and stakeholder bodies early.** A maker/artist-led 501(c) organization, a property-owner / business association, and a planning-commission-style citizen advisory body should be in place before any major capital project enters design. The Asheville pattern of RADA + RADBA + AARRC is the minimum viable governance footprint.
6. **Engage the freight railroad immediately.** Initiate communications with the railroad's Public Projects engineering team during the planning phase. Identify which crossings, trestles, and right-of-way constraints will need to be addressed; assume the railroad will not permit bridge raising; design around lowering, widening, or grade-separating the roadway instead. Plan for a five-year horizon for any deliverable that requires affirmative railroad cooperation.

Stage 2 (Years 3–6): Secure Federal Capital and Adopt Character Controls

1. **Pursue a smaller federal planning grant first.** The TIGER II / BUILD / RAISE / SS4A / Reconnecting Communities program family rewards agencies with current planning and environmental work. Spend the first federal dollars on planning, NEPA, and preliminary engineering. This is how Asheville earned the standing to win the 2014 TIGER VI capital award.
2. **Bundle the capital project around multiple federal and state funding streams.** The replicable RADTIP stack — federal TIGER (~30 percent), county tourism authority (~15 percent), state DOT (~10 percent), state environmental and parks trust funds (~5 percent), local bonds/general fund (~40 percent) — should serve as the financial template. Do not over-rely on any single source.



3. **Adopt a form-based or character-based code at the inflection point.** The right moment to adopt form-based zoning is when private investment has begun arriving, but before institutional capital has consolidated holdings. Asheville adopted its RAD form-based code in 2017, after the TIGER VI grant was awarded (2014) but before most major building sales (2018 onward). Uplate building form, frontage, and the public-realm interface, not use; the goal is to permit continued mixed light-industrial / arts / hospitality / maker use while preserving the character that justified the investment.
4. **Engineer the road-rail-highway interfaces as both transportation and identity infrastructure.** Treat at-grade crossing upgrades, freight bridge clearance work, roundabouts at legacy multi-leg intersections, and highway off-ramp approach treatments as integrated design problems. Commission public art for each of these interfaces; the gateway is the brand.

Stage 3 (Years 6–10): Build the Public Infrastructure While Protecting the Working District

1. **Establish a “district vitality partnership” before construction begins.** Modeled on Asheville’s RAD Vitality Partnership: monthly meetings among the artist/maker organization, the business association, and city staff; a dedicated business-continuity fund (Asheville’s \$25,000 was modest — agencies in larger cities should plan for \$100,000–\$500,000); shared funding for temporary wayfinding (Asheville’s pole banners cost more than \$24,000); a single shared website for during-construction district information.
2. **Sequence and phase carefully; assume a 20–30 percent bid premium.** The Asheville experience shows that mid-decade construction inflation can drive bids above engineer estimates. Identify in advance which scope items can be deferred without unraveling federal grant compliance; do not over-commit on scope; build a 20–30 percent contingency into the cost estimate; identify supplementary local match (Asheville used the Tourism Product Development Fund) that can be activated rapidly.
3. **Right-of-way acquisition deserves its own communications strategy.** Begin direct, named communications with potentially impacted property owners at least eighteen months before any “letter of impact” is sent. Offer above appraisal value for acquisitions involving critical anchor properties. Treat eminent domain as a last resort, not a routine tool.
4. **Build the public-art commissioning into the capital project from day one.** A 1% for Public Art ordinance applied to the capital project — as Asheville did with the five RADTIP public-art commissions, including the Cleaster Cotton poetry installation on the 13 Bones pedestrian bridge and the David Earl Tomlinson “Big Fish” sculpture — produces gateway-quality district identity at minimal incremental cost. Commission artists who already live and work in the district.
5. **Design the greenway, sidewalk, and bike-lane network as the district’s principal connective tissue, not as an amenity.** The Wilma Dykeman Greenway became the spine that



ties the RAD's buildings, parks, and breweries into a coherent walkable experience. Two-way protected bike lanes, lit greenway segments, accessible boat ramps, and integrated public art each compound the value of the others.

Stage 4 (Years 10+): Steward the Brand and Anticipate Maturation Pressures

- 1. Anticipate institutional investor consolidation.** As property values rise, expect out-of-region institutional capital to acquire anchor buildings (the Phil Mechanic, Riverview Station, and Curve Studios all changed hands to non-local investors after 2016). Tools to deploy in advance: long-term lease commitments for artist tenants, community-owned anchor buildings, arts-focused community land trusts, conservation easements on critical character buildings (RiverLink's model), and rent-stabilization mechanisms tied to maker/artist use.
- 2. Steward the district brand actively.** Establish a single entity (typically an artist-led nonprofit) as the district's authoritative voice. Coordinate use of the district name in marketing, real estate listings, and tour-operator products. Treat the district name as a community asset.
- 3. Keep the working light-industrial uses.** The RAD's most easily lost asset is its actual industrial production — the foundries, woodworking shops, clay-supply businesses, metal fabricators, and food/beverage producers who anchor the district's authenticity. Zoning, lease structures, and tenant-retention programs should explicitly protect light-manufacturing alongside arts uses.
- 4. Plan for the second-generation capital project.** A successful first-generation infrastructure project (RADTIP) typically requires a second-generation follow-on (greenway extension, additional bike/pedestrian connections, transit integration, second-phase mural and public art programs) approximately 10 years later. Begin the planning, environmental, and financing work for the second-generation project before the first generation's grand opening.

Benchmarks that would change these recommendations. If land values within the district double in less than 5 years, accelerate community-ownership/land-trust acquisitions for anchor buildings; the Asheville pattern shows that property value escalation outpaces institutional response time. If the federal infrastructure funding environment shifts (e.g., the reduction or elimination of the BUILD/RAISE programs), pivot to state-led funding stacks (state DOTs, state tourism authorities, state environmental funds) and accept a smaller, but more locally controlled, capital project. If the artist/maker counts within the district and declines more than 20 percent over any three-year period, treat that as an emergency signal of displacement-from-success and deploy emergency tenant-retention programs.

Disclaimers

Cost figures for RADTIP vary across sources from approximately \$35 million (City of Asheville construction-contract figure) to approximately \$50 million (broader bundled investment per third-party retrospectives); both appear in this paper because they are defensible, and the difference reflects scope



definition. Pieces of public art are attributed to specific artists in this paper (Cleaster Cotton, David Earl Tomlinson). The artist of the larger-than-life sprocket sculpture along the Wilma Dykeman Greenway, and the artists for the Park Gateway and Murals components of the RAD public-art plan, were not individually confirmable from publicly available City documents at the time of writing.

No formal design or planning awards were located for RADTIP or the Wilma Dykeman Greenway specifically (the 1989 Asheville Riverfront Plan won the APA Large Scale Planning Award; that award does not transfer to RADTIP). This is somewhat surprising given the project's scale and may reflect the City's choice not to submit the project to award competitions during the 2024 storm recovery period.

The RAD case is one of many possible case studies in light-industrial creative-district redevelopment. Other cases would offer complementary lessons. A redevelopment agency should commission additional case studies before adopting any single model as a template.

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