



Connecting Artists and Spaces

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## Creating a District

### Policy Mechanisms

#### 1. Marketing/Branding/Establishing an Identity

The easiest way to establish a cultural district is to use urban design and marketing to establish a brand or identity for a district through unique streetscape, festivals and promotion. One way to establish an identity is through renaming of an area (changing the street names, etc.) by designating it a cultural district through legislation or by simple announcement.

#### 2. State Legislation

Several states (Rhode Island, Maryland) have passed legislation that creates cultural districts. New York is currently examining the possibility of doing the same through Cultural Development Area Act legislation.

#### 3. Urban Design Tools

*Streetscape:* A powerful tool for marketing or branding a district is streetscape renovations. A number of different methods can be used to market a district to the public. For example, rename the street; install banners, creative street paving, and creative street furniture (lighting, benches, paving, signs, trashcans, mailboxes, etc.); get artists to create window displays; and commission exciting public art. Involving local artists in the process of the creation of streetscape will make it unique and assist in branding.

*Wayfinding/Connectivity:* In all cultural districts, it is important for the public to know that a special district exists, understand how to navigate the area, and discern its boundaries. Hence, maps, identifying signs and other creative wayfinding assistance are imperative to any district.

*Festival Spaces:* Spaces for ongoing festivals/events may be provided as part of district to make the area a destination and to help reinforce the public's image or memory of an area as a "cultural District."

### Zoning A District

Zoning has been used historically in two ways to assist in the creation of cultural districts:

1. by changing the use (typically a special use district is made to allow cultural uses where they were not allowed before); and
2. by changing the bulk and density allowed (to increase or decrease the bulk and density of buildings to allow for more or less development).

You can see some [examples of zoning for districts here](#) [0].

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