



## Equinox Studios & Watershed

### **A Timeline of Art, Community, and Creative Space in Georgetown**

*The connection between Equinox, Watershed, and The Bend was forged over decades of community-led and community-centered development and placemaking in Georgetown.*

#### **2005 – Creating a Home for Artists in Georgetown**

Artist and builder Sam Farrazaino leases a historic industrial building in Georgetown with the goal of creating affordable workspaces for artists, makers, and artisans. He envisions a space where creativity thrives, free from the pressures of rising real estate costs. Equinox Studios is born.

#### **2011 – Securing Long-Term Stability**

After six years of leasing, Sam is able to purchase the original building, ensuring that Equinox remains a permanent home for artists. Ownership offers stability, affordability, and a long-term commitment to the community.

#### **2015 – Expanding & Establishing a Tenant Ownership Model**

With consulting support from Ben Rankin, Sam acquires two adjacent buildings to further expand Equinox Studios. More than just adding space, this expansion introduces a tenant ownership model, giving artists and artisans an equity stake in their creative community.

A fourth building is leased, bringing the total footprint to nearly 100,000 square feet, housing 125+ artist and artisan workshops. Equinox is able to serve fine painters, sculptors, metalworkers, musicians, fabricators, and other creatives—reinforcing Georgetown's identity as a hub for the arts.

#### **2019 – Protecting Artists & Fostering Community Through Development**

As Georgetown faces increasing development pressures, Sam and Ben joined by Richard Conlin establish Georgetown Community Development (GCD) to acquire land for workforce housing and cultural spaces. Their goal: protect Georgetown's creative and working-class identity. Community Development Partners (CDP) is created to help manage these projects.

Soon after, Georgetown Community Development Authority (GCDA) is founded as a nonprofit steward of community land and development. The focus remains clear: preserve affordability for artists and makers while fostering a thriving, inclusive neighborhood.

#### **2021 – Transition to Community Ownership & Major Investments**

GCDA becomes the community trustee for Equinox Studios and surrounding properties, ensuring that these spaces remain artist-centered and community-driven. Equinox Studios and newly acquired properties are transferred into GCDA ownership as GCDA becomes Watershed



Community Development, and secures \$40 million in bond financing, safeguarding long-term sustainability for arts and affordable spaces. A transition process begins, with the founders recruiting a board and staff to lead the next chapter.

### **2022-2024– Phase I: Developing Artist-Centered Affordable Spaces**

Watershed now owns 17 buildings, with plans to redevelop 13 of them into six mid-rise, mixed-use buildings that blend affordable housing and creative commercial spaces – The Bend is born! 100% of the housing will be affordable for individuals earning at or below **60%** of the area median income. At least 70% of the commercial space will be reserved for artists, artisans, nonprofits, and cultural organizations. Partnerships form with developers like TWG (160 affordable units) and SRM Development (215 units), ensuring that artists, makers, and small businesses remain in Georgetown.

**Find out more about The Bend and our 100 commitments to the community in our District Plan, on the Watershed Resources webpage.**