

# Guide for Business Districts to Work with Local Artists

A CREATIVE PLACEMAKING TOOLKIT

INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION  
SPRINGBOARD FOR THE ARTS  
UPDATED 11.10.17

**SPRINGBOARD**  
*for the arts*



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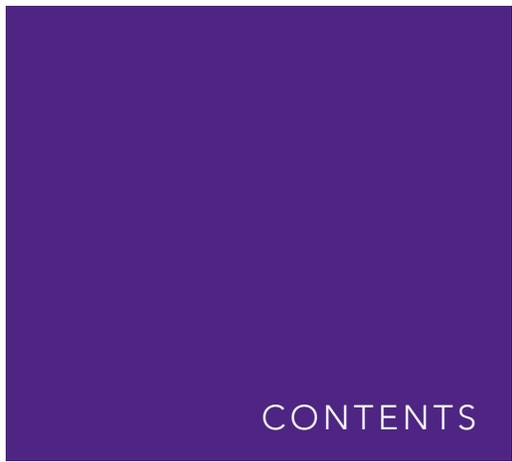
### Springboard for the Arts

Springboard for the Arts is an economic and community development organization for artists and by artists, based in Saint Paul and Fergus Falls, MN. Springboard's work is about building stronger communities, neighborhoods, and economies, and we believe that artists are an important leverage point in that work. Springboard for the Arts' mission is to cultivate vibrant communities by connecting artists with the skills, information, and services they need to make a living and a life. Our programming focuses on supporting the work of artists through professional development, health, and legal resources, and creating systems and programs for communities to connect to the creative power of their artists. We share this work nationally via our Creative Exchange platform ([www.springboardexchange.org](http://www.springboardexchange.org)) and by freely sharing our work and creating connections among artists and communities, we work to make substantial, system-wide change. For more information, visit [www.springboardforthearts.org](http://www.springboardforthearts.org).



*The Guide for Business Districts to Work with Local Artists* developed by Springboard for the Arts for the International Downtown Association is made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts through the Our Town Knowledge Building grant.

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## From IDA & Springboard for the Arts

Dear Urban Place Manager,

### Creative placemaking is a key ingredient in the recipe for the success of revitalization efforts.

This creative placemaking toolkit was created specifically for business districts, offering guidance on engagement with local artists to best enhance the experience and vitality of a place. This guide showcases strategies to integrate the talents and ideas of multiple artists to best address the unique opportunities and challenges within business districts.

This toolkit is an invitation to partnership and creativity. Artists, working with businesses, can help address a whole host of needs and opportunities. Artists can communicate a unique identity and sense of place; improve public safety, traffic calming, wayfinding, pedestrian and transit experiences; activate and beautify physical spaces like vacant lots, storefronts, and fences; celebrate existing amenities, assets, history, and culture; increase sense of stewardship from businesses and residents for greater economic prosperity; attract new customers; fill gaps between destinations to create a sense of a whole district; engage and bridge different cultures; improve public or media perception, and offer pop-up and seasonal activities. The list is only limited by our imaginations.

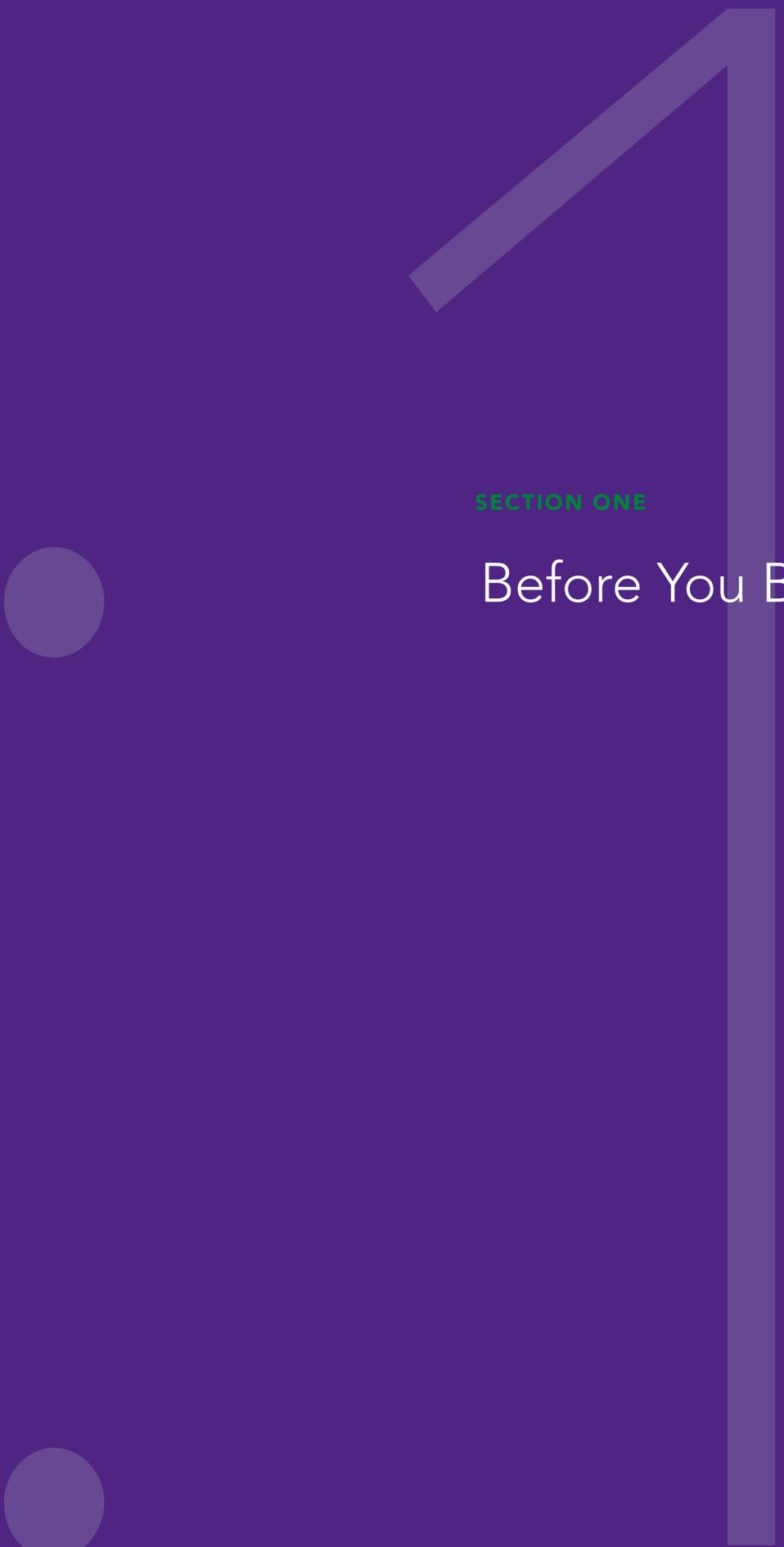
IDA members are urban place managers who are intimately involved with daily placemaking projects and management. We are pleased to offer this customized guide designed to address the specific needs, talents, and resources of place management organizations, via an approach that has been tested and proven through projects in Saint Paul, MN; Mesa, AZ; Cleveland, OH; and Nashville, TN. This toolkit, developed by Springboard for the Arts, will aid in strengthening the capacity of IDA members, while extending the very best practices developed over the years.

This endeavor directly connects the arts with both economic and community development experts to enhance the local vitality, identity and potential of place. Our hope is that IDA members and other business districts will expand their understanding of the value of working with artists and learn new approaches of how they can work together. This is an exciting partnership for creative placemaking in our urban centers.

Sincerely,

**Cole E. Judge**  
Director of Research  
International Downtown Association

**Jun-Li Wang**  
Artist Community Organizer  
Springboard for the Arts

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SECTION ONE

Before You Begin

# Before You Begin

This is a guide to integrating the talents and ideas of multiple local artists as part of a strategy to address the unique opportunities and challenges within business districts.

This guide is designed to be customized to the specific needs, talents, and resources of place management organizations, and the approach has been tested and proven through projects in Saint, Paul, MN; Mesa, AZ; Cleveland, OH; and Nashville, TN.

## Business District Challenge

+

## Local Artists

x

## Multiple Small Projects

=

## Authentic Identity/Branding

+

## New Connections

### WHY LOCAL ARTISTS? WHY MANY?

Downtowns and business districts from small towns to urban neighborhoods to large cities all have opportunities and challenges to create authentic, unique identities that support place-based economic prosperity. Whether the challenge is large, small, or hidden, local artists bring practical skills and perspectives to issues that can draw people and positive attention in distinctive and genuine ways.

#### *Why work with artists?*

- Every place has artists and creatives – tap into your existing assets
- Artists are people who make and who do
- Artists bring creativity, out-of-the-box thinking, and unusual solutions

#### *Why local?*

- Local artists reflect the authentic history, culture and flavor of an area
- Local artists have existing connections to businesses, community and the area
- Local artists already have commitment to area and can become your best boosters

**Why many?** We advocate that when you start working with local artists, you work with multiple artists over multiple sites rather than one or two artists. The advantages of having multiple projects by different types of artists (and their business collaborators) are:

- More businesses/sites with new activities
- More distinct individual projects
- More opportunities to attract attention of media and customers

- More types of people engaged through different projects
- More opportunity to understand what draws people
- Longer potential timeline of activities
- Disperses risk across activities, so no one event carries too much responsibility for the success of the overall project

**What is art?** We borrow a broad definition of art from writer/artist Allan Kaprow:

**“...art is a weaving of meaning-making activity with any or all parts of our lives.”**

*See Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life, Allan Kaprow.*

We encourage you to think broadly about the artists and creative people in your community – these are the people with connections to the area who can share what makes it special to them.

## IMPACTS

There are three primary impacts when you engage local artists in addressing your business district's unique opportunities and challenges.

**Share identity and brand.** By engaging many artists in modest projects you create opportunities for people to have positive experiences of a place, created by the people who live, work and shop there. These activities can generate increased positive media coverage and visibility. Multiple media stories about fun, exciting and curious activities contribute to a unique identity and brand for the district.



*Artists Chris Lutter-Gardella & Rene Meyer-Grimberg created a large two person puppet for The Black Dog Café as an ambassador of hope and renewal, drawing attention to areas affected by construction to encourage patronage of local businesses. Photo by Peter Haakon Thompson.*

**Build new networks.** By connecting businesses and customers in new ways through artist-led projects, the new relationships between all three can lead to future activities that reflect shared interests.

**Increase business visibility and prosperity.** By creating projects that draw people and attention to individual businesses and districts, artists help independent businesses remain viable and also help to attract new investments. Projects designed by artists and businesses can indicate cohesion and mutual support, drawing greater attention from new and existing customers.

## BEST PRACTICES

These overarching best practices have proven to be critical to success:

**Define artist broadly.** Creative people, whether they create as their livelihood or as part of their life, are those who make things, as well as imagine them. We say artists are people who consider themselves to be so, from someone who sings in church choir or knits for family to someone whose work is collected by museums and commissioned to do large projects.

**Work with local artists.** Artists are everywhere – business owners, employees, residents – and are in every building and every block. These are people who know the place, love the place, and will use their creativity to tap into a district’s potential and opportunities. An invitation and a charge to artists to use their creative skills to help their own district and community produces powerful and authentic results.

**Work from existing assets.** Work with and from what exists in a place – businesses, owners, people, cultures and sites. Each is a resource and has strengths to bring to the issue. By boosting and connecting what exists, you increase social capital and relationships that can continue long past a project timeframe.

**Collaborate across sectors.** Work with diverse and even unlikely partners – more perspectives, skills and networks create more results. Other partners can bring their constituents to your district. Work with arts organizations that have their own connections to local artists.

**Give people a common cause.** Help people see how their small action can combine with others and together add up to something bigger in support of where they live. Make t-shirts and posters to make the cause visible and to give people a sense of shared identity and investment.

**Provide simple mechanisms.** Make it easy for people to work together, with simple and low-risk on-ramps. Have as few rules and restrictions as possible, making them clearly understood.

**The whole is more than the parts.** Seeding a place with many small projects involving multiple artists provides more opportunities to engage businesses, bring new customers, attract media coverage, and develop more relationships than one single large project.

**Build lasting relationships.** Collaborating together in new ways creates relationships, capacity and work habits that last beyond a project and lead to other actions.

**Pay artists!** Artists are entrepreneurs and people making a living like the rest of us – value their contributions and pay them for their work.

# Creative Placemaking

The term “creative placemaking” has come into common usage over the past few years, and there is some ambiguity and debate about what the term means. By focusing on working with local artists, you ensure authenticity and celebration of your district’s unique assets. This is what we mean when we use the term:

*Creative placemaking is the act of people coming together to change overlooked and undervalued public and shared spaces into welcoming places where community gathers, supports one another, and thrives. Places can be animated and enhanced by elements that encourage human interaction – from temporary activities such as performances and chalked poetry to permanent installations such as landscaping and unique art.*

Whether you frame your work in terms of creative placemaking or not, if you are strengthening community in a place – that’s what you’re doing. Recently there are more funding opportunities under this idea – never a bad thing to know about.





SECTION TWO

# Getting Started

# Getting Started

Clarify your context and goals enough to start targeted conversations with potential partners and collaborators – but then fully flesh them out together so that you are all in agreement and on the same page.

## IDENTIFYING GOALS

Have a general sense of your goals so you can have targeted conversations, however, remain flexible and expect to continue to develop and clarify them with partners as they come on board. Goals developed together will be more relevant and ultimately, more likely to be achieved.

### a. Identify district challenges and opportunities

**What is the location?** Is it your entire district, a vacant stretch, an emerging node, an upcoming construction project, a set of lots or buildings, a riverfront? What are the boundaries and the physical features? Is it full of small independent businesses, a mix of national retailers and boutiques, family-owned and hipster businesses?

**What are the challenges and opportunities?** From the tangible to the intangible – the physical sites to public perception, etc.

**Who are the various stakeholders?** Consider specific groups, including property owners, businesses owners, customers, neighbors, investors, etc.

**Who are the customers?** Who are the existing customers, and are their needs being fully met? Do you have new target customers you'd like to attract? What will bring them?

**What else?** Are there strategic relationships between groups of people or interests that you'd like to build? Are

there attitudes or habits that you'd like to change? Are there types of people you want to engage through the artist projects? You might be interested in intergenerational or intercultural exchange, or connecting business owners to the neighborhood they are in.

### b. What will artist projects achieve?

Referring to the challenges/opportunities above – what are you hoping these artist projects will achieve? This could be very specific to more general, such as revitalizing vacant storefronts on a main street to bringing a sense of identity to a neighborhood node. Perhaps it might also include engaging neighboring businesses and residents in new ways. It is helpful to keep the goal of the projects in mind.

## COLLABORATION

These projects both have a greater impact with more partners and collaborators, but are also an opportunity to try working with organizations and businesses that you may not have had the opportunity to do so with, particularly your local arts institutions, organizations and groups. Even with key partners in place, there are many opportunities to include additional collaborators on outreach, facilitation, and resource connecting that will make it more successful.

### a. Who are the stakeholders?

Think broadly, and think about all aspects of the issues that you identified above, from the physical site to people and groups who could be involved. These could be organizations, companies, groups, types/communities of people, and individuals. This is a great time to reach out to groups that you have not worked with.

- Who's already involved or related to this?
- Who's affected by it?
- Who must, should, and could be involved?

**b. Who represents the stakeholders?**

You may have already identified some stakeholder representatives in section (a), but think of more using the prompts below.

***For instance:***

- Affinity groups (activity club, history society, etc.)
- Arts organizations and institutions
- Chambers of Commerce
- City and county government (including departments and initiatives)
- Community development corporations (housing, economic)
- Corporate giving
- Cultural organizations
- Educational institutions (including extension services)
- Issue-based organizations (health, environment, art, equity, etc.)
- Local or regional employers
- Local planning departments
- Neighborhood/geographically-focused organizations (neighborhood association, watershed or park organizations)
- Other surrounding business and commercial associations
- Real Estate Developers
- Social service/support organizations (homeless services, food shelf, etc.)

**c. Who's interested?**

Start meeting with the people and organizations you identified above to see if they are interested in the idea. You might want to split the list into a few groups – with the roles below in mind. There are different levels of working together, so you'll want to find overall partners sooner, and then you can all look for collaborators together.

**Important qualities to look for in partners and collaborators:**

- Complementary or overlapping mission and programs
- Expertise and connections in other areas besides yours
- Capacity to participate (with or without direct compensation)
- Chemistry – can you work together to achieve successful implementation?

**d. Define roles**

As your discussions progress, make sure you clarify roles as each partner joins.

***Key partners/leadership team:***

- Staff with decision-making capacity from each key partner and lead program implementation staff
- Make major strategic and program structure decisions
- Fundraising and financial management

***Program staff:***

- Design and implement overall project
- Collaborator development and management
- Outreach to artists
- Design and facilitate workshop and study hall
- Design and manage project application, selection and implementation
- Management of artist contracts
- Publicity plan
- Coordinate artist project documentation
- Program evaluation
- Social media
- Media tracking
- Photo and video documentation
- Major event coordination

**Other collaborators:**

- Outreach: connect artists to workshop/project opportunity, connect artists to potential project collaborators.
- Workshop co-facilitation: share facilitation of workshop, provide local issue/area context, and connect to local resources.
- Project support and advising: advise on project criteria, provide feedback and/or participate in selection process, assist in troubleshooting.

See the partnership agreement template on page 31.

Note: Not all of this work needs to be done by your staff. Depending on resources and capacity, many of these roles can be met by a freelancer.

## PICKING A PROJECT NAME

*Wait to select your project name until you have key partners. Together, pick a name that is distinct from any one single partner's programs so that you all can equally claim and promote it.*



Artist Kao Lee Thao worked with local youth to paint a mural intended to help inspire a temporary plaza space for the Little Mekong business and cultural district. Photo by Soozin Hirschmugl.

## FUNDING

Consider a variety of funding sources, including your existing resources. If you have a marketing budget – use some of it to engage a local artist to work with a few businesses around an intersection to bring buzz to the businesses instead of on print or other advertising – earned media travels further and has a longer shelf life than paid media. Depending on your goals and target area, the project may fit into non-traditional funding sources including arts, community engagement, community development, and economic development. Depending on the challenge you are addressing, there may also be support available from government or business programs. Arts institutions, cultural organizations, housing or transit authorities, redevelopment programs, marketing and tourism, and social entrepreneurship investment groups may all be possible partners or supporters. Your partners may also have access to or be eligible for other sources.

### **Tap into exiting sources:**

- Marketing
- Branding
- Events
- Public safety
- Wayfinding
- Streetscape improvement
- Beautification
- Maintenance

### **Nontraditional sources:**

- Arts
- Public engagement
- Public art
- Community development
- Economic development
- Youth engagement
- Transit improvements

## BUDGETING

It is important to have enough resources to create a critical mass of projects to create momentum and variety and more opportunities to reach multiple audiences.

If you have fewer resources, we recommend concentrating artist projects in a smaller geography over a shorter time and even considering it a pilot or trial run – leaving room to build on momentum and success. A pilot can be an effective strategy to show “proof of concept” and demonstrate demand from the business community, which can lead to additional investment. With more resources you can sustain the project longer, address more issues, and be more expansive with the number of artists involved, target geography and time line.

These sample budgets provide some guidelines for small and large projects and include all of the costs of implementation. We start with \$1000 as the basic amount to support a small artist project; depending on your location and goals, a different amount might make sense. It is important that this support be modest, so that you can create a low-risk environment for businesses and artists to try new ways of working, and create a project that a business could imagine funding on their own. At the same time, be realistic about how much an artist can accomplish.

If you do a larger project with many artists, consider creating a deeper impact by working with your local arts organizations to train and support the development of local artists to work with businesses/cross-sector. For examples of this and a training curriculum, see Springboard for the Arts toolkit “Irrigate: a Toolkit for Mobilizing Local Artists to Solve Challenges in Your Community.”

Get it for free via Creative Exchange:  
<http://springboardexchange.org/irrigate/>

## SAMPLE BUDGET RANGES

Expenses	Pilot/Short Time Frame	Large Site/Long Time Frame
Number of artist projects	5	50
<b>Staffing</b>		
Project management, design	\$2,000	\$30,000
Key partner support	In-kind	\$5,000
Outreach/marketing	\$1,000	\$5,000
Evaluation	In-house	\$5,000
<b>Artist workshops (optional)</b>		
Collaborating arts organization support	n/a	\$5,000
Artist workshops (space, supplies, hospitality)	n/a	\$5,000
<b>Artist projects</b>		
Project stipends (includes materials)	\$5,000	\$50,000
Overall marketing and events for artist projects	\$2,000	\$15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>



*A Poetic Walking Tour by punk poet Paul Dickinson and historian Aleah Vinick about gentrification and car culture on University Avenue in Saint Paul, with a historical details along the way to support and enhance Paul's stories. Photo by Alex Roob.*



SECTION THREE

Design Your Project  
& Find Artists

# Design Your Project & Find Artists

## SELECT LOCAL ARTISTS

We recommend issuing an open invitation (also known as a “call”) for local artists, rather than hand-picking artists whom you know because there are many advantages to casting a wide net for all kinds of talent.

### *Why use an open call for artists?*

- Raises awareness of your association and district
- Brings a greater variety of artists in touch with you
- Indicates creativity of your association and district
- Creates excitement for eventual/upcoming project
- More artists will recognize your association as being interested in collaborating and in creative solutions
- Piques broader curiosity and is an opportunity for media coverage
- Reach more people who might become customers, supporters, stewards, fans
- Inspire/lead by doing something differently
- You can engage your own stakeholders (board, businesses, others) in the selection process and develop greater buy-in & support for the project
- You will learn who more of the local artists are; even if they aren't selected for an immediate project, they might be a good fit for something down the road

## WRITE YOUR CALL

Assuming you decide to issue a call for artists, you'll need to write it. Remember, write clear, understandable, un-jargony calls. Have a few artists give you feedback before you send it out!

### *Project criteria*

Define the project criteria based on your business district's challenges and opportunities within a defined target area. Think more about what you want the projects to do, and

## WHAT ABOUT TAPPING INTO EXISTING ARTIST GROUPS?

*There may be artists who are members of a group or organization defined by medium, career stage, or even location. Depending on your goals and resources, you might choose to partner with them and focus on engaging their members initially. The one caution here is to engage artists in a diversity of media, or encourage them to work across disciplines – you probably don't want to limit artist projects to one type.*

less about what they will be – leave that to the artists to imagine and deliver. You'll need to know the following, some of which you'll already have identified in Chapter 2:

### **Goals**

What are the goals of the project? What do you hope to have happen? Keep these broad, giving the artist and potential collaborators room to be creative.

### **Target area**

Where will projects happen? Indoors, outdoors, public or private spaces? A block, a building, specific businesses, vacant storefronts?

### **Type of artistic activity**

Is this completely flexible as long as it meets other requirements? Does it need to be temporary, event-based, permanent, visual, auditory, outdoors?

### **Eligibility**

How are you defining artist? How are you defining local?

### **Define who is an artist**

To engage as many creative people as possible in your district opportunity, we advise using a broad and inclusive definition of who's an artist. You'll also need to be clear about this so that people recognize themselves in your definition and don't self-select out.

**We suggest using:  
Artists are people who  
consider themselves artists.**

These can be people who sing in church choir and knit for family, to poets, printmakers, and musicians who make part of their living as artists, to full-time artists who win awards and have work in museums.

### **Define "local" so artists know whether they are eligible**

Depending on how your city is organized, and how people understand it (often two different things), "local" might be defined by:

- Official boundaries from neighborhood to regional scale
- Historic, cultural or commercial boundaries
- Live and/or work
- History in a place (particularly growing up and having family in a place)

### **Project time frame**

Are projects to happen during a certain time period? Or cluster around a specific date (projects might span different periods, and but you might want a cluster of activities on a festival weekend)? Or maybe everything is happening on one day?

### **Artist funding**

How much money will artists receive? Is it intended to cover supplies (if any)? Are there constraints on how they use the funds (we suggest not)?

We start with \$1000 as the minimum amount to support a small artist project; depending on your location, a different amount might make sense. For your sanity, we recommend that this is the full amount for the project – including artist stipend and supplies. Do emphasize to artists that they should do a project commensurate with the amount of support.

If this is the first time you are intentionally working with local artists and have the funding to hire several, the project funds can be modest, so that you can attract and pay many artists to implement projects, create a low-risk environment for artists and businesses to try new ways of working, and create a project that a business could pay for on their own.

#### **Other considerations for artists**

**Collaboration.** Are they expected, if selected, to collaborate with a business to finalize their project? How will you be helping artists make these connections?

**Community engagement.** Do you expect them to involve the public? In any particular phase of their project (design, implementation, as audience, etc.)? How will you help with this (marketing, coordination, etc.)?

**Public event.** Is there a public event requirement? Do they need to include an occasion for gathering or not? Or perhaps you are centering activity around a weekend, so some part of the work needs to happen during it.

#### **What about quality?**

The “best” artists will be the ones who are best at meeting your goals through doing the work. Having early, in-depth conversations about your goals, whom you are trying to reach and support, and the lasting impact you want to have on the district will help you decide how to think about what quality and success looks like for you and your project.

For collaborative approaches such as these, quality is defined by what the partners hope to achieve, such as:

- What is the quality of collaboration?
- How will the project change people’s experience and perception of the place?
- What is the quality of interactions that will be sparked?

#### **What about rules and regulations?**

Obviously, you need to do your best to make sure that the projects that happen with your support don’t break any laws and don’t put anyone in any danger. That being said, you also want to create an atmosphere where people – both artists and their business collaborators - feel permission to take action to support their shared goals and community in creative ways.

#### **A few tips:**

- Make sure you (and the artists you work with) understand the different rules for public and private property. The more the projects can take place on private property (parking lots, lawns, windows and exterior walls of privately owned buildings, etc.) and in collaboration with those private property owners, the less you will need to worry about insurance, permits and bureaucracy.
- If projects are on public right of way/public property, it’s important to have a relationship with your city government and specific staff who can advise you. You might find, especially for temporary projects, city staff might say “Do it, and let’s hope no-one complains.” Good city partners will help your artists navigate sign ordinances, event permits, street closures, etc.
- Depending on your target area, city regulations, and goals, you may need to develop a one-page sheet to address common questions about permanent and semi-permanent art, signage, murals, or historic properties.

#### **Project application**

Once you have defined your project, create the application. **See the artist project application template on page 32.**

For a more detailed guide you can use the “Find An Artist” toolkit from Springboard for the Arts as a guide: <http://springboardexchange.org/find-an-artist-toolkit/>

## DISSEMINATE YOUR CALL

Post the application and other information online – your website and social media channels – so that people can easily link to it and share. Work with your key partners and collaborators to reach artists. If you’re using a broad definition of artist, make sure you post information beyond the typical sources artists use to find information. Partners and collaborators can also personalize outreach to speak to their constituents.

### **Spread the word:**

- Ask artists where they find calls
- Social media
- Local online forums and groups
- Arts and cultural organizations
- Local/community organizations
- Art/design departments of schools
- Artist resource/information sources
- Community and artist bulletin boards

## SELECTION PROCESS

You’ll want to create your selection panel. A selection panel is typically an odd number of people and has at least 5 people. Any more than 9 people becomes hard to manage and is not the most effective use of everyone’s time. The panel should have a mix of stakeholders and expertise: staff from your association and partner organizations, arts administrators and artists experienced with artistic work that has a public component, other organizations that have an interest in your district. You can also make strategic invitations of people you hope to get interested and who can become enthusiastic and strong supporters. You may decide your staff is advisory to the panel and not a voting member.

### **Stipend**

If you are asking independent artists or community members (ie they are not “staff”) to be on the panel – it is great if you can offer a stipend of \$100 or more as a small token of appreciation and recognition of the time they are spending.

### **What’s being judged?**

It’s important to make sure the panelists understand what criteria and qualities they should judge. Remind them to look at the application and highlight the criteria. If you are selecting multiple projects, you may also want to select a diversity of projects based on artistic medium, artist background, etc.

### **Share applications**

Give your reviewers minimally 2 weeks to review applications. We recommend providing a spreadsheet with the applicant names, project titles, and then columns for pre-scoring.

### **Pre-scoring**

Ask your reviewers to give tentative scores to the applications, which will be combined and then help structure the in-person panel discussion. We suggest reviewers use:

**Yes**, this is great and a perfect fit! Fund! - 3 points

**Maybe**, but I have questions or reservations - 2 points

**No**, compared to the rest, I think this is a poor fit - 1 point

### **Panel review**

Meet for 2 hours and provide refreshments! Combine the scores from all the reviewers, and based on how project scores cluster, suggest a process to select the winners.

If there is clear consensus based on the scores that there are great projects (all 3s) and poor projects (all 1s), you may decide to automatically select the top ones, disregard the poor ones, and then discuss the projects that received votes in the middle and revote on those only. It's up to you how you use numerical voting – whether those are for helping discussion or those are for final decision-making.

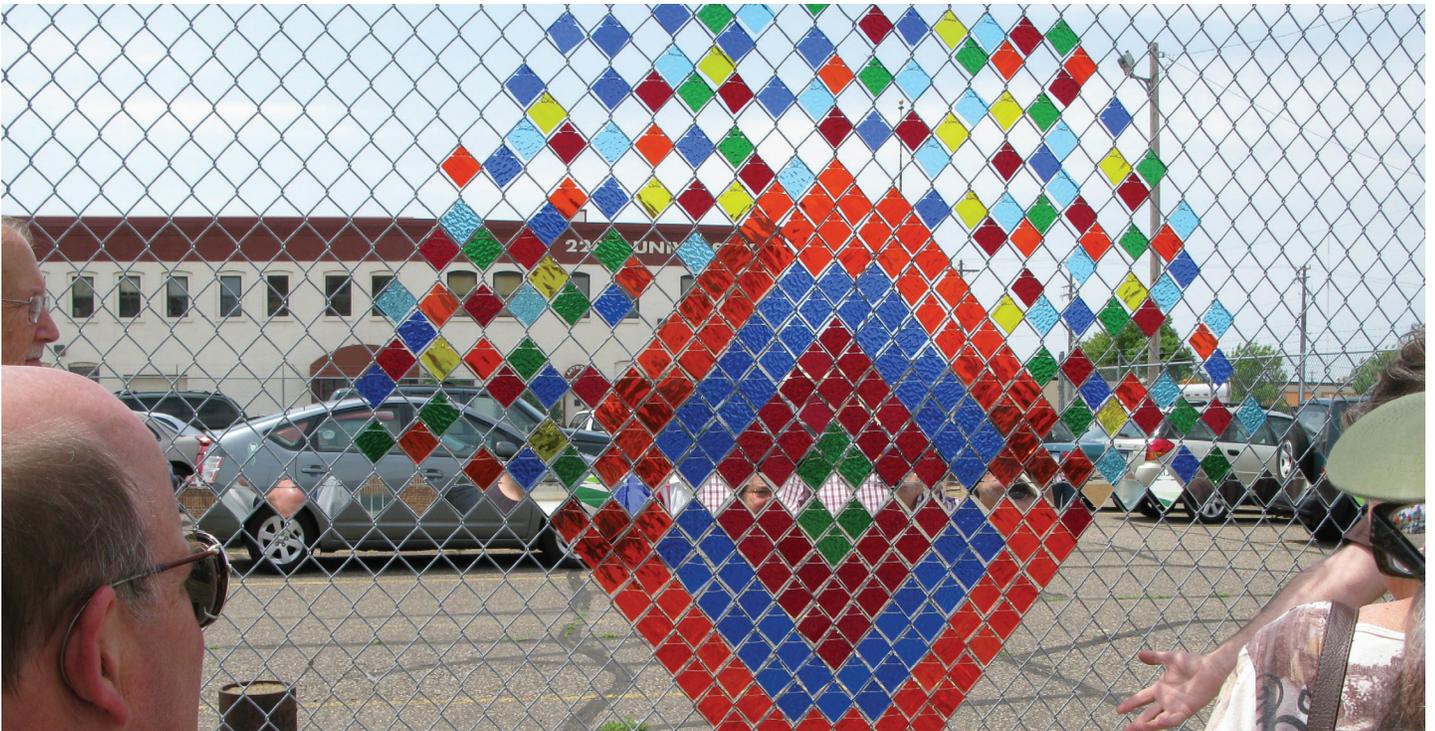
If you are funding many projects, you may also be able to support “riskier” projects (less familiar artistic form, business owner capacity is a question for you, artist is testing something new, etc.).

### **Adjustments**

If you get a submission you like but want to adjust it slightly, you can always ask the artist if they would consider a change – and they may be perfectly happy to do so, especially since there is a collaborative aspect to this approach from the get-go.

### **Notification**

Notify the artists! Notify both the artists who were selected, and those who were not. Many artists will be interested in following and supporting the projects in the district even if they were not selected, so make sure to thank them for their interest and give them ways to stay involved.



Artists Steve Bougie and Richard Fuller created a stained glass piece installation, “Paddlewheel-Peoplewheel,” in a chain link fence. Photo by Peter Haakon Thompson.



SECTION FOUR

# Project Management

# Project Management

## ARTIST PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Once you've selected the artist projects, there are multiple steps to ensure successful implementation. Create a "packet" to give to the artists that includes:

- Congratulations cover letter with expectations and payment instructions
- Contract to sign and return
- W9 form
- Final report form

### **Artist contract**

Always have a contract that explicitly states roles and responsibilities. Include:

- Description of project and any deliverables (you may also attach the application)
- Milestones/timeline
- Roles and responsibilities of the artist
- Roles and responsibilities of commissioning organization
- Artist copyright of project and work produced
- If a permanent piece, maintenance and replacement information
- Artist insurance requirements
- Documentation agreement
- Credit acknowledgement
- Payment and schedule

**See the artist contract template on page 34.**

### **Copyright**

When an artist has created a work, they automatically own the copyright to it. Even if the physical work is sold, the artist still owns copyright unless they specifically transfer that copyright in writing. It is exceedingly rare for an artist to give up their copyright.

### **For permanent artworks – Transfer of Title**

If the work (or part of the work) is permanent, such as a bike rack or sculpture, you may want a transfer of title in addition to the contract. When a physical artwork is completed, a transfer of title formalizes that the artwork is now owned by whoever commissioned it. This does not extend to copyright but simply refers to the actual physical artwork - similar to selling a car, this document indicates ownership.

**See the transfer of title template on page 36.**

### **Artist insurance**

Artist projects would typically be covered under private business/property owner insurance. Nonetheless, it may be something you inquire about, and there are resources for individual artists. A starting point to check: [www.springboardforthearts.org/insurance-guides](http://www.springboardforthearts.org/insurance-guides)

### **PRESS**

Take advantage of the media – they are always looking for content. With multiple artist projects of different types, you'll find that more than only the business or entertainment reporters will be interested in your story. The angle might be the artist, the business, the project itself, or the particular challenge. When artists work cross-sector, it is easier to make connections outside the art world and connect the work more widely.

### **Get the word out**

Getting the word out about the artist projects is critical - not only so people can attend and participate, but also so that you build awareness and a media buzz around your efforts. Even if people aren't able to attend an event, or rarely visit your district to notice changes, hearing about it in the media and by word of mouth changes people's perceptions of an area.

**Online/social media**

Make it easy for people to learn and share information about the artist projects - create an online presence on your website or a partner's, particularly for events and activities, but also progress reports or blogs. Facebook events are an easy way to reach a broad audience.

**Press releases**

If the artist projects are happening at different times, it may be worthwhile to issue a press release for each project. This also helps you maintain your message, clearly communicating the story and goals of the project. You may manage these with artist/business input, or if there are over a dozen projects, you may want to encourage and assist artists to issue the press releases themselves. This not only benefits the artists who learn how to do it for themselves, but then the press releases come from multiple artists instead of your association alone – potentially attracting different attention from the media.

**TROUBLESHOOTING**

We find most problems stem from miscommunication, whether it's between artists, businesses, organizers or other stakeholders. Having clear expectations about the scope of the project, the resources that are available, and the schedule for payment can help head off issues. If you do find yourself in a situation where there is some conflict, focus on the fact that you are all working together to impact change in an area you all care about – it can be easier to defuse a situation when people remember that they all live together.

**DOCUMENTATION**

Document everything! Images and video can tell the story more quickly than numbers and text alone. These projects will produce stories that you will want to share. Even if you require artists to document their work, you'll be best served if you also document projects and have the images/footage handy for your own use. We suggest that you:

- Use artists' final reports to help capture the story for you
- Hire photographers to document each project, especially event-based temporary ones
- Send a photographer around every so often to capture permanent/semi-permanent projects
- Hire a videographer to track a few projects and create short videos

**Image tips for photographers**

Photographers have different styles. To get the documentation you want, be explicit. We suggest requesting 20-30 images max, including:

- Before and after photos
- Wide shots - to understand context, overall setting, whole project
- High-resolution photos above 1MB
- The art piece(s)/performance/activity
- Artist(s) doing their thing, wide and close-up
- Customer/audience participation

**Title cards**

Whether projects are permanent, semi-permanent (short-term installation) or temporary (performance, activity), create title cards with the artist name, project title, and date to display at the site of the project. Even if the project is completed and no longer visible, the title card is still an indicator and reminder of the project. You may provide these to the artist to install, or you may install them.

## EVALUATION

Evaluation of your program is important. Whether it is designed as a pilot program or large scale and longer term, evaluation will inform you of which elements of your program are working, what can be adjusted and improved, whether you are achieving the results you want and proof of concept to use for future fundraising. Keep in mind the goals you defined in Chapter 2, and use these additional questions to guide your evaluation design.

### a. Success criteria

#### **Why are you evaluating?**

- Who is it for? Yourself, your members, key partners, existing funders, potential funders, the community?
- What is it for? To learn and improve your programs, to prove a pilot is worth expanding, to find more collaborators, to attract support? To document what happened?

#### **What are the results you seek? What will happen?**

Describe these in concrete terms and numbers, such as:

- # projects
- # people attending events or visiting exhibits
- # people engaged
- # of media mentions
- new types of people engaged
- % of satisfied collaborators
- % of businesses who had new customers
- % of businesses who had increase in sales on project days
- % of artists and businesses who would collaborate together again

#### **What are the long term goals?**

What will change? Economic stability/vibrancy, district identity, revitalized main street, sense of place, attitudes, perceptions?

Be specific. What are the indicators (measurable signals that change has occurred)? For example:

- Increased small business stability. Indicator: businesses have new customers who return
- New connections. Indicator: artists and businesses chose to work together without your participation
- Improved district identity. Indicator: positive media mentions of district

### b. Data collection and analysis

#### **What data will you collect?**

Based on what you identified as success criteria, you will need to decide what data is reasonable to collect, and what methods you will use to collect it. Prioritize what you want to measure, and also leave room for your curiosity to guide the questions. Data may be collected by a combination of individuals, including program staff, the artists and businesses, partner staff, student researchers and outside consultants, depending on your resources and the methods you use. Be realistic about your capacity and budget.

#### **What methods will you use?**

Balance your methods with what you're trying to achieve in your programming and your capacity. Inviting people come to a joyful event to only have them fill out a demographics survey before they can participate is not welcoming and can make people feel like a number. Staff/artist observation is a perfectly good method – leaving people to have their experience without disruption. At the same time, asking people what they think and what they like or would change can be valuable – especially if you want to develop relationships directly with them and are open to where the conversation might go.

**Some common measurement tools:**

- Observation (head count, aerial photos, some demographics)
- Pre and post surveys/questionnaires (self-administered, given by surveyor, or online survey site)
- Key stakeholder interviews
- Conversations
- Focus groups
- Artist final reports
- Post-project survey of collaborator
- Pedestrian counting technology
- Media coverage (set up Google alerts to help)
- Local sales tax data

**Who will analyze the data?**

Analysis is not magic. It can help if another person can take all the information collected (surveys, focus group transcripts, media articles) and do a first organizing of the data to summarize findings and look for trends. Someone closer to the programming can then look more deeply to draw conclusions about the impact of the work.

The results also need not be wholly numeric. This work is best illustrated by a combination of descriptions, images and numbers. Think about the story that the data can tell.



Artist Dianne E'Laine led participants in performing "Light Rail Shuffle," her original song and choreographed dance about public transit; its history, and its future. Photo by Peter Haakon Thompson.

### CELEBRATE

Take advantage of the multiple artist projects and new relationships to highlight the work you are doing to support your district. After all the projects are completed, host a final celebration that acknowledges and celebrates all the participants – artists, businesses, other collaborators, and the public. This is another opportunity to build positive attention for your community, and also attract additional support for this work.

### FINISHING STEPS

A final set of information captures valuable information about artist projects for telling the overall story and encourages artists and businesses to reflect on the experience. This may be source for testimonials as well.

#### Artist project final report

We recommend that you make this a requirement in order to receive final payment.

As you write final report questions, think about what information you want to collect. These might include:

- What happened?
- How many people participated, and in what ways?
- Were there unexpected results?

**See the artist final report template on page 37.**

#### Project collaborator survey

Instead of hoping busy business owners will fill out a survey, consider administering it in person or on the phone. This also gives you a chance to learn more nuanced information and further develop your relationship with them.

**See the project collaborator survey on page 38.**



Artist Ashley Fairbanks and her work "Median," which collected soil from Minnesota's Indian reservations and displayed them during HOMELAND: Native Artists Create on the Ave, a creative placemaking project in partnership with the Native American Community Development Institute. Photo by Mary Richardson.



SECTION FIVE

# SIX FUNDED PROJECTS

## Six Funded Projects

In tandem with the guide, IDA and Springboard seeded six projects with \$5,000 grants to support creative placemaking. This work was made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts from its Our Town program.

These projects took place in the spring of 2017 and are scaled to support local artists' work in creating more vibrant and engaging local business districts.



### **DOWNTOWN CROSSWALK BEAUTIFICATION** **Chandler, AZ**

The Downtown Chandler Community Partnership (DCCP), a nonprofit business improvement district operating in Chandler, AZ is seeking an artist or artist team to design artwork graphics for pedestrian crosswalks at three crossings along Arizona Avenue in downtown Chandler. The selected artist shall create a series of design variations that reflect the unique identity, diversity, culture, and/or history of downtown Chandler.

### **MAIN STREET SOUNDS** **Memphis, TN**

Main Street Sounds is a new effort to bring busking and live music performance to street corners and public sidewalks in downtown Memphis. The Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) will hire local musicians for up to 100 performances along the Main Street Mall during the midday lunch hour and early evening. The program will run for 10 weeks from mid-March through the end of May.

### **ELM CITY MOSAIC** **New Haven, CT**

Im City Mosaic is a creative placemaking partnership with the Town Green Special Services District, local artists, teachers, students, and downtown stakeholders. This project aims to transform forgotten places into cared-for spaces that all can enjoy, with colorful mosaic murals of hand-painted tiles. Local high school students will plan, design, create and install a large mural of tiles to cover chain link fences on selected locations in downtown New Haven.

### **MAKE IT RAIN POEMS** **Oklahoma City, OK**

Downtown Oklahoma City Initiatives and the Downtown Business Improvement District, with the help of Short Order Poems, a group of local poets, will be installing original poems from local artists on the sidewalks and plazas throughout the central business district in downtown Oklahoma City that will ONLY appear when raining. As sidewalks become rain-soaked during our rainy, spring season, the waterproof painted poetry will remain dry and become legible to pedestrians.

### **THE CALLIOTREE** **Santa Ana, CA**

Downtown Inc. is partnering with renowned a local artist and creative engineer, two local schools, and the City of Santa Ana to reintegrate a community landmark into the public realm. The artist will adapt digital infrastructure onto a 30-foot tall dying sycamore tree (a historic local landmark) to transform it into a programmable audio-visual art piece that acts as a giant musical instrument for anyone to play.

### **TEMPE'S SOUND CANOPY** **Tempe, AZ**

This collaboration between the Downtown Tempe Authority, the City of Tempe, local businesses and artists will activate a city-owned dumpster transformed into a mobile pop-up park by the Public Works Department. This project will empower an artist(s) to transform it into a comfortable, inviting sitting/gathering space. It will be parked in a parking space in front of businesses.

## DOWNTOWN CROSSWALK BEAUTIFICATION Chandler, AZ

The area surrounding Chandler, AZ's Dr. A.J. Chandler Park is one of the highest traffic neighborhoods in the downtown. Located in the heart of the original town square, and named after the city's founder, the park plays host to many local festivals and is surrounded by retail shops, galleries, restaurants and office buildings. With its popular ramada walkways, A.J. Chandler Park attracts thousands of visitors and residents each year, and also functions as the site for the city's monthly Art Walk. But the park is also home a lot of vehicular traffic, as Arizona Avenue, the major thoroughfare through downtown, cuts the park into nearly neat halves placed on either side of the avenue.



For Beth Fiorenza, this unique challenge—a highly used public space by both pedestrians and cars—presented an interesting opportunity to, “combine safety and art.” Fiorenza, Executive Director at the Downtown Chandler Community Partnership, came up with the idea to beautify three crosswalks located along the busy Avenue with colorful designs. With no lights at each of the crosswalks, beautifying them would be a way to increase their visibility while testing out a new kind of public arts project in downtown Chandler.

“We were looking to do something that brought people downtown and offered that surprise of ‘Wow, look at this!’” Fiorenza tells me.

With a grant secured, the DCCP, a nonprofit whose mission is advancing the development of downtown Chandler, set out to complete their first public arts project in over five years. Working in partnership with the City of Chandler, they put out a request for proposals (RFP) to local artists, asking for original design submissions that reflected the unique identity, diversity, culture, and history of downtown Chandler. Their RFP solicited 20 original submissions from

artists across the city. To assist in narrowing down the winning designs, the DCCP relied on a City agency with its own experience with the arts, the City of Chandler's Arts Commission. Using a five-person committee made up of members of the Arts Commission, the DCCP choose three colorful, vibrant designs by a total of four artists.

Noe Baez, a native Arizonan who counts the city of Chandler as a hub for him and his family, was one of the artists chosen to work on the project. A multidisciplinary artist who also teaches art sessions and workshops, Baez, came across the RFP and had his interest piqued. “An experience to connect with the community and create a public art piece together is something that I truly covet,” he says. “I submitted my design and was overjoyed when I was selected! The experience was monumental.”

With the winning designs selected, the next challenge for DCCP was how to execute the beautification project. After all, Arizona Avenue, an old highway, was one of the busiest streets downtown and getting approval to shut it down for the crosswalks to be painted was no easy feat. Working with a number of City agencies, including the Parks and Recreation Department and the Transportation and Development Department, the DCCP secured a permit for the street closure that would allow the crosswalk paintings to take place on March 25th, 2017—which also happened to be one of the City's largest festivals; the Great American Barbecue & Beer Festival.

Now in its eighth year, and held at A.J. Chandler Park, the event provided Fiorenza and her team with the opportunity to tack their project onto an existing street closure, avoiding further inconvenience to downtown commuters. The festival also provided the DCCP team with a chance to attract a larger audience to their project: residents and visitors who would then hopefully return to explore what other things were happening in downtown Chandler. Working with Great American Barbecue & Beer Festival event organizers, HDE Agency, DCCP organized its launch event



around the Crosswalk Beautification.

Featuring live paintings of the crosswalks and informal discussions with some of the artists involved in the designs, the event attracted huge amounts of foot traffic Fiorenza notes.



"People would just stand and talk [to us] for like 20 minutes. It was an amazing experience. One woman almost cried, telling us, 'This is something we need to do more and see more of.'"

Baez, who invited his son to paint alongside him adds, "The day was filled with tons of smiles and great interaction with the participants and those that just stopped to watch and take photos. The crowd really engaged and identified with at least something on the design. It evoked encouraging conversation and was followed up with hopeful anticipation to see more of our styled art in the area."

Aside from the artists—and some of their family members, as in Baez's case—DCCP also invited volunteers to help with painting the large designs, which included a blue ostrich, an animated robot and a light bulb and cogwheels design. According to Fiorenza, the response to the call for volunteers was tremendous. DCCP was able to successfully recruit approximately 50 volunteers who worked in phases to assist with painting and traffic control. As an incentive, each volunteer received a free ticket to the Great American Barbecue & Beer Festival happening a stone throw away from the launch event. Further, the traffic paint used for the beautification (which lasts six to seven months depending on traffic) was generously donated by Ennis-Flint Traffic Paint, allowing DCCP to further drive down the costs of the project and direct more of the budget towards the artists. "It ended up being such a successful project, more than I thought!" Fiorenza tells me, reflecting on the project.

That is not to say that the project was not without its challenges. For one, "I probably wouldn't paint on a highway

again," Fiorenza quips. While lucky to have been able to piggyback onto an existing event for the street closure, the process of getting the project approved was lengthy for DCCP. Based off the other successes of the project however, DCCP is considering replicating the Crosswalk Beautification on other streets with far less traffic, transforming portions of downtown Chandler into colorful reflections of its unique identity. Secondly, while the Crosswalk Beautification was meant to bring more attention to the crosswalks along this busy section of Arizona Avenue, for both drivers and pedestrians, what Fiorenza and her team learned was that the paintings were generally hard to see for drivers. Instead, they seemed to do a better job at improving safety for pedestrians.

In the end though, the project provided the DCCP with a chance to gauge both the interest of the community and artists in public arts projects around a vital area of downtown. The City has plans underway for a redesign of A.J. Chandler Park and DCCP is already thinking of creative ways to partner with them during the process. "We have these large ramadas," Fiorenza states, "with the redesign of the park, we're talking about doing a live artist night to allow artists to come in and paint murals along the walls of the ramada."

Currently, the Crosswalk Beautification has generated another creative placemaking opportunity. DCCP in partnership with the Arts Commission is working with a local artist to create a mural that will sit on the wall of one of their popular downtown restaurants, and adjacent to a highly used parking lot. "It's gonna be our first mural!" Fiorenza tells me excitedly, signaling the start of many more projects to come to downtown Chandler.

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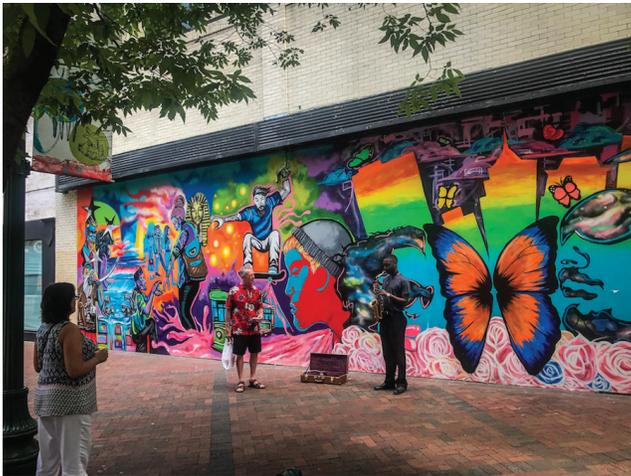


**PHOTO CREDIT: Page 31-32**  
Downtown Chandler Community Partnership. (2017). Downtown Crosswalk Beautification. Chandler, AZ.

## MAIN STREET SOUNDS

### Memphis, TN

Home to more than a handful of America's musical greats, from Elvis Presley to BB King to Justin Timberlake, Memphis is a city best known for its music. It's here you can still find Al Green performing at local venues or preaching in his church on Sundays. From Beale Street to the legendary Sun Studios—the most famous recording studio in the world—“this is the land of the Kings and Queens of rock and roll,” local musician Jeff Hulett says.



While what may sustain the Memphis music scene in the cultural memory of many is the nostalgia for its heyday of the 50s and 60s, there is a lot of great music to be heard in and around town today. For the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC), an independent development agency working to attract people to its downtown, Memphis' musical history combined with a new crop of musicians, presented an untapped opportunity. In 2016, the DMC began working on plans to get more of Memphis' music into the ears of its residents and visitors with live performances on Main Street Mall, a pedestrian-only street. According to Brett Roler, Vice President of Planning and Development at the DMC, “What we wanted to do was reinforce downtown, specifically our Main Street pedestrian mall as a place where you can walk and happen upon live local music.”

In October of last year, the organization hosted the Main Street Busking Challenge. An open call was put out to amateurs, students, and professionals in all genres of music, inviting them to perform live at the Mall for a chance to win a five hour studio session among other prizes. Over the two-night Challenge, over 40 musicians performed. Passers-by voted by ballot on who would win the grand prize.

“It was a great look and feel for Main Street Mall and encouraged us to take the next step,” Roler states.

In April, with funding from a grant offered by Springboard for the Arts and the International Downtown Association, the DMC launched Main Street Sounds, a two-month project featuring 50 busking performances along Main Street Mall. Each performance, lasting an hour, features a local musician. To attract the highest foot traffic, performances were creatively scheduled to target the weekday lunch hour, weekend evenings and the popular Sunday brunch. Additionally, the DMC scheduled the project to begin in April with a few performances each week. By May, a huge cultural festival month for the city—featuring the Beale Street Music Festival, Memphis in May, a marathon, and other local festivals—the number of performances and musicians on downtown's streets increased alongside the crowds, with multiple performers sometimes playing at the same time.

When it came to planning the project, Roler and the DMC's initial challenge was changing the perception of busking in Memphis. For one, many people weren't familiar with the term, used to describe performing on a public street or space, often for tips. In addition, local musicians were unaware that they could busk in downtown Memphis. Unlike cities such as New York where busking, particularly on subway platforms, is popular enough that many don't question it, busking in downtown Memphis was hard to come by. Josh Cosby, a local musician performing in the series who has busked both in and outside Memphis, notes that for many musicians there is a fear they will get arrested. “But as long as you have your permit you can play all day long,” he states.

For the DMC, “part of this project is to legitimize busking in downtown. Make sure people understand that it is something we want to encourage,” Roler tells me. “What I'm hoping will come out of this project is more long term. We want to reaffirm this principle that live music performance isn't just icing on the cake but it's a building block of creating the kind of downtown we want.”



As a result, educating musicians on the permitting process has been a large part of the DMC's work. In an effort to make it as easy as possible to busk, the DMC, a quasi-governmental organization, simplified the permitting process and waived all busking permit fees a few years ago. This year's grant allowed the nonprofit to incentivize performances by offering musicians pay. In all, 30 performers, ranging from well established musicians to emerging ones were chosen to be part of the series. Marcella Simien, who performs with the band Marcella and Her Lovers, is one of those musicians. Slated to play multiple performances throughout Busking in Memphis, the income potential of the gig was one of the reasons she agreed to it. Alongside payment from the DMC, musicians are also able to collect tips.



"I think it's an incredible opportunity for working musicians," Marcella states, "it really helped me to have another source of income this Spring."

Beyond the income incentive, there is something special about performing on a public street, as Marcella a first time busker found out. "It's really exposed me to a different audience which has been really cool," Marcella states. "The late night crowd is very different from the people working downtown on their lunch break. You catch them off guard. It's perfect timing. I love surprising people by doing something unusual." Cosby agrees. Busking for him has always been less about the money and more about the inspiration he gets from his performances. "If you play in front of people on the street, you have no choice but to conjure something up from the inside," he states.

Hulett, who also works for the Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau and has extensive ties in the local music scene, was chosen by the DMC to lead the search for musicians to perform in the series. He would end up booking most of the acts for the series. For the remaining slots, the DMC put out a call for video entries, reached out to local colleges and universities and the symphonies in town in search of talent. From individuals to duets to rock and roll to soul and hip hop musicians and more traditional horn

players, Hulett and the DMC were able to draw a diverse group of acts to Busking in Memphis. Marcella, who originally hails from Louisiana, was one the acts secured early in the planning sessions as an anchor to get other musicians involved because as Hulett states, "everyone kind of gravitates towards her."

During her busking sets, Marcella plays on a single row diatonic accordion performing traditional songs, songs she's written, and covers ranging from Nina Simone to the Velvet Underground. Cosby plays acoustic guitar and sings during his sets. He also does Sam Cooke and Ray LaMontagne covers. The Pocket Band, a duo, play acoustic guitar and perform covers of mainstream songs. Other scheduled performances feature saxophonists and cellists. In a nutshell, Busking in Memphis is an ode to what makes Memphis so unique - its sounds.

Along the way, the DMC is documenting the project through photos and videos that they can use to further promote the series. Their hope is that musicians, both outside of the series and those performing in it, will be inspired to take their music to the streets. After all, Busking in Memphis is all about changing perceptions for everyone. For visitors, the DMC hopes that they will leave Memphis with a belief and the experience that this is a place where good music is still being made. For musicians, the hope is that they will feel supported and know that the streets of downtown Memphis are always a home for their music; no matter how unknown or distinguished they may be. As for the residents of the city, the music series is an effective reminder that theirs is a city where music not only lives, but also thrives.



From Creative Exchange. "Busking in Memphis," by Kari Mugo, 2017 (<http://springboardexchange.org/busking-in-memphis/>). Copyright 2017 by Springboard for the Arts. Reprinted with permission.

**PHOTO CREDIT: Page 33**

Michael Starnes. Photo courtesy of the Downtown Memphis Commission. (2017). Main Street Sounds. Memphis, TN.

Jamie Harmon. (2017). Main Street Sounds; Memphis duo "Me & Leah.". Memphis, TN.

**PHOTO CREDIT: Page 34**

Jeremy Stanfill. Photo courtesy of the Downtown Memphis Commission. (2017). Main Street Sounds. Memphis, TN.

Downtown Memphis Commission. (2017). Main Street Sounds. Memphis, TN.

## ELM CITY MOSAIC New Haven, CT

When the city of New Haven, CT, began construction on Route 34 in the 1960s, the idea was that it would connect the city to its suburbs in the Lower Naugatuck Valley. Instead, Route 34 had devastating effects for the city; completely cutting off the Hill neighborhood from the rest of downtown, displacing over 800 hundred families and demolishing 350 buildings. When construction on Route 34 stopped in the 1970s, residents were left with a roadway that led to nowhere and a fractured downtown.

“The initial phase was concluded but it didn’t go far beyond downtown, which is probably a good thing in hindsight,” David Sepulveda, a local artist and Arts and Culture writer for the New Haven Independent, says. “It saved further neighborhoods and communities from becoming borders for a super-highway.”

There are major redevelopment efforts underway in New Haven to reconnect the Hill, which houses Yale School of Medicine and the Yale-New Haven Hospital to its surrounding downtown. This has meant increasing opportunities to attract attention to long forgotten spaces.

Charlotte Eliscu, who lives and works in downtown saw an opportunity to begin transforming some of these forgotten spaces on one of her many walks to work. Eliscu is Director of Marketing at Town Green Special Services District, a business improvement district responsible for 27 square blocks in the downtown area.

“There’s certain locations that are forgotten,” Eliscu states. “They come to have more litter, if something was planted there it wasn’t watered. It’s not offensive, it’s not dangerous, it’s just not really considerate for anybody.”

Eliscu began thinking of ways she could turn these locations into cared-for spaces that exuded New Haven’s vibrancy and rich history. She came up with the idea to design, create and install large tile murals to cover chain link fences at selected locations in the Town Green District. Early this year, with a creative placemaking grant from Springboard for the Arts and the International Downtown Association, Eliscu began working on a project titled Elm City Mosaic.

New Haven being a city where “art is almost everywhere you look,” according to a New York Times article, there was no shortage of artists for the organization to reach out to in creating the project. To begin with, they reached out to Sepulveda, a huge proponent of public arts and a “larger than life” personality according to Eliscu. Sepulveda is well versed in mobile making, set designs and also known for his large installations, such as his Snowbama sculpture—an

icy tribute to the 44th President. For Sepulveda, his interest in Elm City Mosaic tied into the larger regeneration happening in the Historic Ninth Square, which sits adjacent to the Hill neighborhood.

“There is so much going on in the area,” he says. “Not far from there is a multi-million dollar project called Downtown Crossing. That project stands to completely reunite and revitalize an area of town that was part of a casualty of 1960’s well intended redevelopment.”



Sepulveda provided the initial placeholder design for the project, but Eliscu also wanted to involve lesser-known artists. Unconventionally, she reached out to Michael Pavano, a high school arts teacher. Mr. Pavano teaches at New Light High School, an alternative school providing opportunities for students to learn while working and connecting them to the things they are most interested in, such as the arts. His students came with the added benefit of previous experience in creative placemaking projects. In the past, they had worked with the Parks and Recreation Department to paint colorful trash barrels for the City and had created a vivid mural for one of their school walls. Sepulveda would guide Elm City Mosaic’s artistic design, with input from the students at New Light who would create and install the design.

“My main goal was having a project where art was accessible and enjoyed by everyone,” says Eliscu. “Also having young people be able to visualize change and influence their environment was very impactful,” she adds.

While Eliscu had originally planned on multiple sites for the project, when it came down to the budget and the grant timeline, she realized that starting with one site would be more feasible. Based off the project’s challenges and successes at the single location, it could then be replicated elsewhere and even feature different artists for each iteration. Securing a single fence location came with its challenges. At the initial proposed site the property owner declined to give approval for the project. After a regroup,

the organization selected another fence location, adjacent to the first, with lots of foot traffic and merchants along the block. Behind the fence sat a regularly used parking lot, a plus in that the parking lot (and consequentially, the fence) would be there for a while, in light of the many new developments springing up in and around the neighborhood.

The second property owner proved to be more excited about Elm City Mosaic and offered to match some capital improvements to the grounds. Eliscu notes, it was, “a wonderful example of a property owner willing to take it to the next level.”

For the half a dozen New Light students engaged in the project, Elm City Mosaic would give them a chance to try their hand at something they had never done before. According to Pavano, for students who haven’t succeeded in traditional schools, the opportunity to try something new, learn to fail at it, and use those lessons towards a successful final product, is instrumental in changing the way they view themselves.

“Their confidence is built. They’re seeing a whole different side of what they are capable of. That’s the most important part, seeing that look of pride on their faces when they see a project from start to finish,” Pavano tells me.

Like most art projects, the concept for the design bloomed. Sepulveda began to think about including a kinetic art element that would evolve the design beyond the framework of the rectangular chainlink fence. Similarly, while initial discussions involved incorporating design tied to New Haven’s seasons, the final plans relied on the unique history of the area to pull passers-by into the story of a part of downtown that has been integral to New Haven’s development and history. Using corrugated plastic (coroplast) panels, Sepulveda wanted to create a mosaic that was “an interesting amalgam of color, form, shape and history.”

“We’re gonna move a little beyond pure abstraction, which as an artist, appeals to me. But because it’s a key economic location, I think it’s a wonderful idea to help people reflect on the legacy of what they’re inheriting.”

These multiple design changes pushed the project’s timeline back a few times, but eventually Sepulveda, New Light and Town Green District developed a concept they felt worked best for the space. They would design an agamograph, a form of kinetic art that features two main images. The centerpiece images would be a map of New Haven and the other, an aerial view of the New Haven Green, a park and recreation area located in the downtown district. Once design and materials had been agreed upon, they now had to wait out the long New England winter which proved prohibitive for most of the direct work such as

painting the tiles and the actual installation.

By June, the team was ready for installation on the fence located on Chapel Street. The installation would also function as their launch. Town Green District invited media, local police and their downtown Ambassadors to help supervise and witness the installation, which took about three hours to complete. According to Eliscu, the “installation went better than I expected. It was both easy and fun! There was a great media turn out, a lot of the teachers from the school helped install, and people who passed by stopped to comment and ask about the project.”

Since its installation, Elm City Mosaic has received a lot of local media coverage, particularly for its inclusion of New Light students. For Tyriq Banks, a senior at the school, the project left him with a sense of pride.

“I feel proud that everyone gets to see what our school did for the community and the city,” Banks told the New Haven Register.

Praise for the project continues to pour in on social media and the community response has been overwhelmingly positive according to Eliscu, with many remarking that it is a welcome addition to the neighborhood, accomplishing Town Green District’s vision for transforming “forgotten spaces.” In the end, the project serves as yet another reminder of the importance of art, not only to the New Haven economy, but in enlivening and enriching the city for all its citizens.

From Creative Exchange. “New Haven’s Elm City Mosaic,” by Kari Mugo, 2017 (<http://springboardexchange.org/new-havens-elm-city-mosaic/>). Copyright 2017 by Springboard for the Arts. Reprinted with permission.



**PHOTO CREDIT: Pages 35-36**  
Town Green Special Services District. (2017). Elm City Mosaic initial design by David Sepulveda. New Haven, CT.

**MAKE IT RAIN POEMS**

Oklahoma City, OK

**“The Biggest Small Town”**

O, almost-city I love you  
around me  
& you love me around.  
I want to kiss you every day  
like the shortest skyscraper  
longs to kiss the lowest cloud

The rain has a way of quieting down any city. Slowing down its frenetic pace and drowning out the noise. Underneath the steady fall of raindrops, the sound of slicked tires and water flowing out of spouts and into drains takes over. Umbrellas snap open and pedestrians hunch over, eyes averted towards the ground. If you happen to be a pedestrian in Oklahoma City, you might just see poetry begin to appear before your eyes on the rain-soaked sidewalks.

Make It Rain Poems is an installation of twenty-four original “rain poems” spread over twenty-seven locations in the heart of Oklahoma City’s downtown. Featuring poems such as Kathleen Rooney’s “The Biggest Small Town,” the poems, which remain invisible when dry, are the result of a creative placemaking project by Downtown Oklahoma City Inc, a not-for-profit organization advocating for downtown revitalization, and Short Order Poems, a local poetry group. Installed in April of this year, the project is an effort by Downtown Oklahoma Inc, to engage commuters and visitors to the city’s downtown—above ground, rather than below it.

Since the 1930’s, an unusual feature of downtown Oklahoma City has been its Underground, a series of underground tunnels spread over nearly a mile of its downtown. The tunnels, connecting 16 city blocks and over 30 buildings, form a major thoroughfare for most 9 to 5 commuters in the downtown area. The challenge, has been how to entice these same commuters above ground to explore the businesses and activities happening there. Make It Rain Poems is one innovative solution.

According to Staci Sanger, the nonprofit’s Marketing Manager, “We wanted the project to bring to light to our commuters that there’s a whole beautiful downtown. There is the opportunity to see incredible art and improve their quality of life during their business day. We also have a ton of visitors downtown on the weekends and wanted to provide a happy little surprise for them.”

Sanger, an Oklahoma City native who describes the city as the, “friendliest place on earth,” asserts there is a lot to be seen above ground. From a world class boat house district

to the Myriad Botanical Garden to each of the downtown’s eight character districts; from Bricktown to Automobile Alley. The nonprofit’s initiative also comes at an opportune moment in the city’s art scene.

“The local art community has been truly blossoming for the last 5-10 years. Even within the last two years, we’ve seen a drastic change in the environment for artists here,” Sanger states.

When it came to creating Make It Rain Poems, Downtown Oklahoma Inc selected Short Order Poems (SOP), a poetry group that has been gaining popularity through their unconventional “poems on demand.” Led by Timothy Bradford and Chad Reynolds, Short Order Poems has been churning out poems on typewriters at the popular downtown H&8th Night Market since 2014.



The concept is simple enough, visitors approach their table, offer some guidance on the kind of poem they would like written and within minutes they receive a one-of-a-kind typewritten poem. Defying the perception that the public doesn’t read poetry, Bradford and Reynolds received an overwhelming response at the monthly market requiring them to bring in more poets to meet demand. Celebrating their third year this March, SOP has gained the kind of name recognition that made them a natural fit for the project. For Bradford, for whom SOP was born out of the need to “add something” to the local poetry scene, there is something magical about Make It Rain Poems.

“We’re completely into this notion of these poems appearing and disappearing with the weather. Then there’s that temporary element that poetry speaks to. This momentary connection with words that speaks to the human condition.”

To execute the project, Bradford and Reynolds began

by submitting the idea to some of the best poets they have worked with, who include notable poets like Allison Hedge Coke. Awarded the 2016 Witter Bynner prize by the National Library of Congress, Hedge Coke, like the other poets featured in the project, has ties to Oklahoma. Once Bradford and Reynolds had their poets, the next step was determining what each poet would write. Past experience had taught them that people liked poems on topics they had suggested. For example, a poem on their favorite movie or their wife. Bradford and Reynolds brought that approach to the project and put out a social media open call for topics.



The public responded. Over 60 topics were suggested, ranging from soggy socks to The Flaming Lips to banjos and cumulonimbus clouds. Instead of picking the topics poets would write about, which Bradford and Reynolds felt removed choice, the duo drew topics out of a hat for each poet. Poets were then given a week to write their poems. For Downtown Oklahoma Inc, this is one of the areas where having Bradford and Reynolds as intermediaries between the business and the artistic side of the project came in handy. Aside from providing a few guidelines such as the length of the poem (not longer than four to five lines), Sanger and her team trusted the duo to guide the artistic process. "It was incredibly invaluable," Sanger says.

"They acted as project manager in a way, not just curatorially. Telling the artists what the requirements were and communicating guidelines with them. They really fielded a lot of questions in that way for us."

The symbiosis of their partnership meant that Downtown Oklahoma City Inc could focus on other aspects of what was turning out to be a one-of-a-kind public project for the city. Among the challenges they faced was a lack of existing permit guidelines for a project like theirs. There was also

the issue of placement of the poems, which meant courting business and property owners alike and gauging their interest. After successfully securing the twenty-seven locations for installation, Downtown Oklahoma Inc worked with Robbi Kienzel, Arts & Cultural Liaison for the City of Oklahoma, to invent a new permitting process for the project. Through the City's Arts Commission, each poem and location was reviewed before they were issued a revocable permit green lighting the project.

Likewise, for Bradford and Reynolds, both published poets, the project came with its challenges. "Publishing" on a sidewalk being something that neither had experience with.

"For poetry, it's relatively simple," Bradford states, "You sit down and you write. What we weren't quite prepared for was thinking about how you cut a really big stencil efficiently or picking a font which looks good."

The project had the duo learning on the go. For instance, at a meeting with City officials, they were asked to ensure proper orientation of the poems. That is, that pedestrians would not be standing in the street to read any of the poems—something that Bradford and Reynolds had not thought about yet. In this way, the duo received a lot of other unforeseen technical assistance with the project: Stephen Saak, founder and owner of S & S Productions, a huge commercial printing and cutting company heard about the project and offered to machine cut the stencils for free; Rick Sennett, an Oklahoma based mural artist with extensive experience working with stencils offered input along the way; a lab tech in the Architecture Department, at Oklahoma State University (where Bradford works) talked them through substrates and stencil fonts. At each stage of the project, the duo found experts eager to help.

"We've learned a whole new skills set, one that most poets don't ever consider," Bradford states.

On a Thursday in late April, Downtown Oklahoma City Inc and SOP set out to install each poem using waterproof paint that will be reapplied every 6-8 weeks. The installation process took longer than they expected requiring the work be divided over three days. Because of the difficulty of launching project that requires rain to make it visible, there was no grand event around the installations. Two days after Make It Rain Poems were installed, a spring rain brought the poems out. With the rain, Downtown Oklahoma Inc went into high gear, encouraging people to find the poems which had a social media presence around the hashtag #MakeItRainPoems. The project has generated media interest for the artists and the project itself and solicited positive responses.

"We've gotten some amazing feedback on our social me-

dia," Stanger states. "Every post and hashtag has started its own conversation. We've even gotten emails saying how awesome it is and had pictures emailed to us."

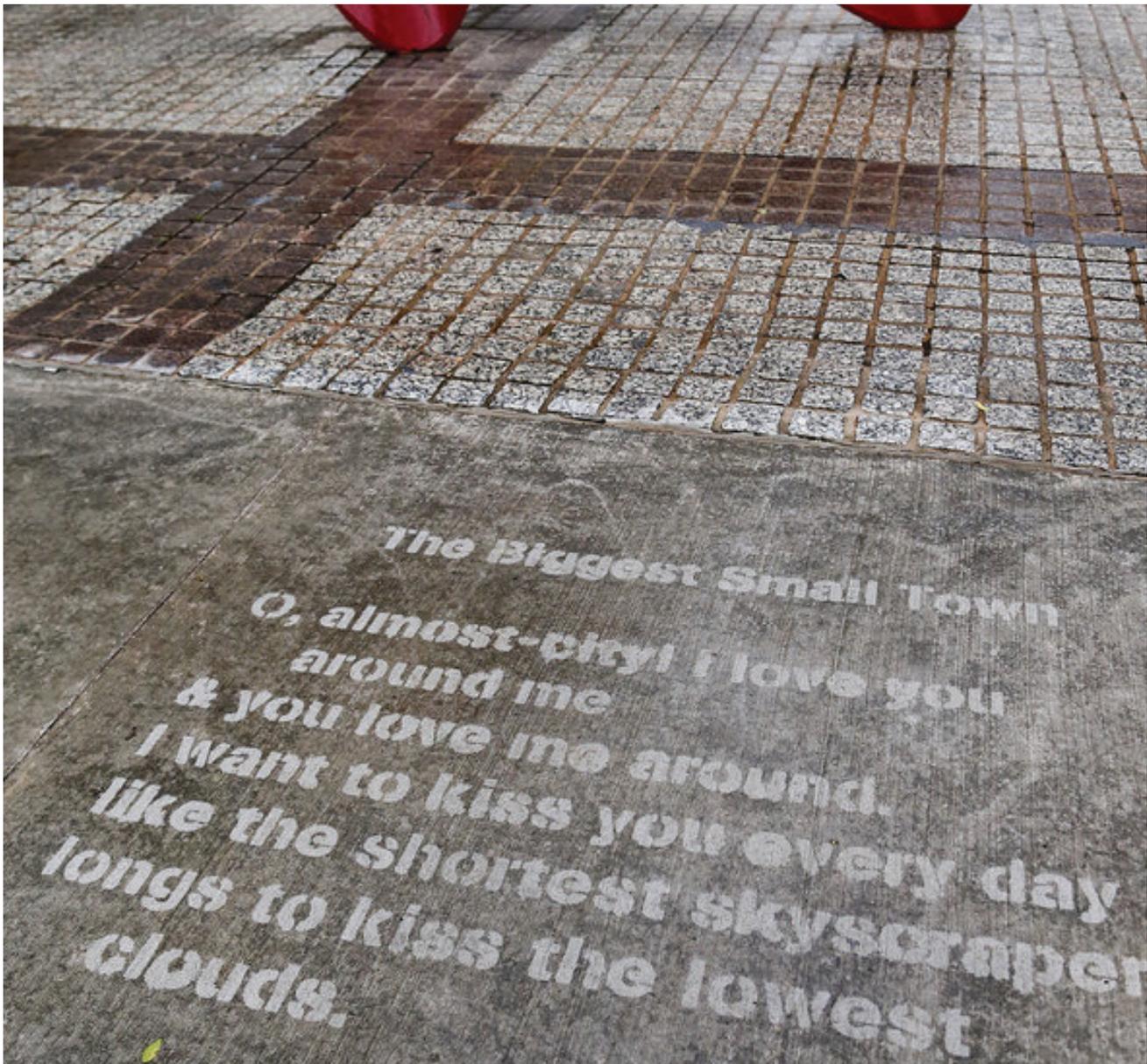
Downtown Oklahoma Inc is in the process of planning some events around the poems which may include a social media scavenger hunt that would offer participants a chance to win gift cards to downtown locations. There is also talk of holding poetry readings at the poem sites. But for now, Downtown Oklahoma Inc is celebrating a success-

ful project made possible through a series of community partnerships. The project as Bradford states is further proof that, "There's new stuff going in everyday in downtown Oklahoma City. It's an exciting time to be here."

From Creative Exchange. "Make it Rain Poems," by Kari Mugo, 2017 (<http://springboardexchange.org/make-it-rain-poems/>). Copyright 2017 by Springboard for the Arts. Reprinted with permission.

**PHOTO CREDIT: Pages 37-39**

Downtown Oklahoma City Inc. (2017). Make it Rain Poems. Oklahoma City, OK.



### THE CALLIOTREE Santa Ana, CA

The story of the birth of the city of Santa Ana goes like this: in 1869, 40 year old William H. Spurgeon climbed atop a sycamore tree to survey the 76 acres of land he had recently purchased in California's Orange County. Enamored by the mustard field valley he saw below him, Spurgeon decided to start a town, making the sycamore tree the birthplace of the city of Santa Ana. Since Spurgeon's climb, the city has gone through booms and busts and undergone a huge demographic shift while welcoming new generations into its arms. Presently, the city boasts a majority Latino population with a huge cultural and economic presence and is home to one of the most vibrant art scenes in Orange County. Amidst all these changes, Spurgeon's tree seemed to have been forgotten about. That was until Ryan Smolar, Lead Consultant at Downtown Inc Santa Ana, heard about the tree.



At a council meeting last year, Smolar heard a Santa Ana resident complain about the disgraceful condition of the tree from which the city had sprouted. This was the first time Smolar, originally from Los Angeles, had heard the story of the city's foundation. He made a mental note of it. Later, driving in downtown's North End area, Smolar remembers, making a left and seeing a giant tree come into view.

"It was the ugliest tree I've ever seen," he recalls. "I remember thinking, 'what's wrong with that tree?'"

This, it would turn out, was Spurgeon's sycamore tree, underneath which sat a small plaque honoring the city's birthplace. While the original tree had been cut down decades ago, a replacement tree had been planted at its site in 1976. This was the tree Smolar was looking at, which sat fenced into a parking lot and appeared to be dying. For Smolar and Downtown Inc, an organization charged with facilitating the enhancement of Downtown Santa Ana, the

birthplace of their city was long overdue for some extra attention. Located in one of Santa Ana's Art Districts and home to the Artwalk (a popular monthly arts event), the tree was perfectly primed for a reintegration into the city's hearts and minds.

With grant funding, Smolar took the lead on a project to honor the tree. Working with Arman Bastiani, an artist-engineer, Downtown Inc envisioned a public art installation that would hug the tree in digital arts, music and human touch, turning it into an interactive instrument for the residents of Santa Ana. In this way, they came up with the Calliotree, the name, in part inspired by the Calliope musical instrument invented around the same time of Santa Ana's foundation.

In initial consultations, it became clear to Smolar that a project like this needed community input because after all, it was about the city's past, present and future. According to Smolar, "I wanted people to be a part of this, so it didn't just appear. We wanted to include people we knew and people who maybe we didn't know." This inclusion would be crucial in honoring each of the city's inhabitants: from residents whose families had lived in Santa Ana for over a century to the wave of Latino immigrants who had established homes here two generations ago to the artists and creatives now adding to the tapestry of the city. The Calliotree would represent all the ways in which these communities had come to coexist.

While Bastiani worked on the design for the installation, Downtown Inc partnered with local artists to plan two community engagement events preceding the launch. The first, would be a community dialogue dubbed Treeversation. Held in March of this year, during Artwalk, Treeversation was led by mixed media and textile artist, Leah Shapi. Individuals who approached Shapi's table learned about the history of the tree and using fabric markers, wrote down their inspirations, ideas and hopes for the project on colorful scarves. To bring added attention to the event, Downtown Inc projected colorful lights onto the sycamore tree and even had a mic stand where individuals could read what they had written to the tree. While unconventional, the Treeversation was successful in getting people interested in the tree's significance to Santa Ana's history. According to Smolar, "That was really exciting. People would stop and want to know about the tree and we would tell them about it and they would one hundred percent retain the story."

For Shapi, a self proclaimed tree lover, the Treeversation provided an opportunity to engage with the community in a different way. "With everything going on in the world," she states, "it had a real warm and fuzzy feeling in people's hearts. We had people from all different backgrounds; kids, adults, different nationalities just playing with the idea of

what they wanted to put on the scarves." Down the line, Smolar hopes to sow the cotton scarves into a tapestry, further commemorating the tree.



The second community engagement event, held during April's Artwalk, was an open music jam session called Treeprov. Downtown Inc envisioned the event as an invitation for artists to explore uses for the Calliotree while drawing visitors to downtown's North End. For Treeprov, Smolar partnered with local businesses on the street where the tree is located to create a closed off event featuring food vendors, live music, live painting and a drum circle, among other attractions. To round it off, an arts group, The Warehouse of Contemporary Art, created projections of the tree onto a wall behind it adding to the aesthetic of Treeprov.

Through these two events, Downtown Inc, was building community knowledge around the tree and learning along the way. For instance, Smolar found out that the tree had been used as a meeting site by a neighboring business, for years, believing that it held good fortune. In addition, while Downtown Inc had been led to believe that it was dying, two unexpected things happened over the course of the project. One, it appeared that the more the community engaged with the tree, the more it seemed to come back to life. Of course, it didn't hurt that the last few months had brought much needed rain to the area.

"We thought the tree was dying and all of a sudden, since I've been involved in this project and the community has been showing love for the tree, all these leaves are growing on it," Shapi states.

Secondly, after consultations with Mike Lopez, the city's Parks and Recreation Arborist, Smolar and his group discovered that in fact the tree was not completely dying. While its top was dead, the tree had started to grow sideways. This is where all the new leaves were sprouting,

on what appeared to be giant branch, but in actuality was the tree growing sideways. It turned out the tree could be saved through a grafting process that would allow it to continue to grow upwards.

On the first Saturday of May, and the third Artwalk event of the project, the completed Calliotree was unveiled. While the artist-engineer's initial designs had to be scaled back for a number of reasons, the main elements of the design remained. Featuring bluetooth amps and sound synchronized lights, the Calliotree was 'played' by local sound and visual artist, Sean Robertson. Lights projected "The Calliotree" onto an electric box, glowing seats were set out on AstroTurf inviting passersby to stay a while and on a small movie screen, a minidocumentary about the project played. Despite a steady rain all day, the event accomplished its goal, inviting people to reflect on the heritage of Santa Ana in a quirky, unheard of way.

All along their learning journey, Downtown Inc meticulously documented their work with the tree through a website dedicated to the project, [calliotree.org](http://calliotree.org). The website, featured not only an overview of the project and its events, but also testimonials from key players, offering the residents of Santa Ana an inside look into the inspiration, challenges and minds behind it. The project stimulated new ideas, partnerships and interest in the North End while tying into something deeply sentimental for Santa Ana. "There's a real heartfelt connection that's almost hard to put into words," Shapi states. "That's what was the most memorable thing about the project," she adds.

From Creative Exchange. "Santa Ana's Calliotree," by Kari Mugo, 2017 (<http://springboardexchange.org/santa-anas-calliotree/>). Copyright 2017 by Springboard for the Arts. Reprinted with permission.



PHOTO CREDIT: Pages 40-41  
Downtown Inc Santa Ana. (2017). Santa Ana's Calliotree. Santa Ana, CA.

## TEMPE'S SOUND CANOPY

Tempe, AZ

"Anything you do with placemaking, you want it to create a sense of an emotional connection," Julie Kent says. Kent, Director of Placemaking at Downtown Tempe Authority, recently led the Arizona city's efforts in a placemaking project that saw a team of artists transform a disused roll-off dumpster into a mobile patio. The goal for Kent and the Downtown Tempe Authority, "a dedicated team of dreamers and doers, buzz builders and business boomers and overall urban advocates," was to create an unusual space that would invite people to hangout and connect with other people they wouldn't normally connect to. "Doing that around art, it kinda breaks all barriers," Kent states.



Located in the Phoenix metropolitan area, Tempe is a vibrant, youthful city and home to the nation's largest public university, Arizona State University (ASU). According to Kent, "it's a very sought after place to live in, being next to freeways and the University. We have a lake and a lot of historic neighborhoods in downtown." This combination of features attracts a lot of young people, families and students to the area, making it prime ground for testing out different ideas on what makes a city thrive.

The idea to recycle the roll-off dumpster came out of the close relationship between the City's Public Works Department and Downtown Tempe Authority. With leaders at both agencies interested in the pop-up patio trend gaining popularity, the Public Works Department agreed to help transform an old roll-off giving Downtown Tempe an affordable means to explore the idea. Their 'blank canvas' would be a repainted dumpster with a railing installed around it and the City's permission to use public parking spaces within downtown for the mobile patio once the project was completed.

This would be the easy part for Kent who led the project; getting the City's departments behind it. The hard part would be transforming the roll-off dumpster into the kind of space that created an emotional connection for visitors and residents to downtown. To do this, Downtown Tempe would need artists who could not only visualize their goal, but also had the technical skills to pull off the project. The non-profit, placed an artist call, inviting individuals and teams of artists to apply. They received 10 applications before narrowing it down to three of the best concepts. The three finalists were each given a stipend to develop a more

detailed concept and 3-D models of their proposals. Two of the three finalists, would be from the same Architectural Sculpture class at ASU.

At the urging of their professor, students in the Architectural Sculpture class had drawn names out of hats to form randomly assigned teams of two that would submit proposals for Downtown Tempe's artist call. Caralie Cedarleaf, an undergraduate student in the Sculpture program wound up drawing Roy Wasson Valle's name, a graduate student in the same program. As it would turn out, both Cedarleaf and Roy's initial sketches for transforming the roll-off were very much in line, though Cedarleaf's ideas proved stronger. Her sketches, which were an ode to her upbringing with two musicians as parents, envisioned the mobile patio as a hangout space, but more prominently as a public arts stage.

"We thought it was a great metaphorical but also literal platform for street musicians to have something sanctioned by the City that is meant to be for performance," Wasson Valle said.

When much to their surprise, they, along with two of their other classmates, were selected as finalists for the project, the duo split the task of refining their proposal based on their skills. Roy, a Meritona-based artist with previous experience working on large scale installations, worked on developing the 3D model, while Cedarleaf fine tuned their proposal.

"We were able to support each other on the things we were good at and what we weren't good at," Cedarleaf states. Their project, The Sound Canopy, would turn out to be the winning proposal.

"One of the reasons Caralie's project was chosen is because all of us connected with the story behind her design. She came from a family of musicians that constantly performed," Kent notes. Featuring both a performance stage and seating, the Canopy would be dual purpose space for use in the cooler Tempe months.

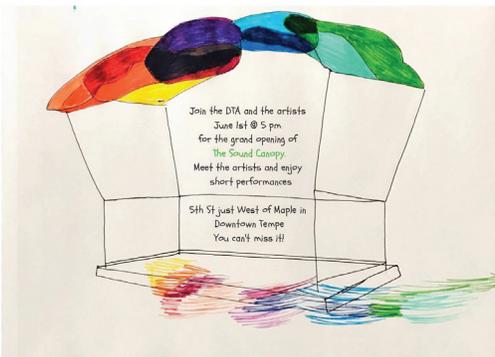
But before the team could begin construction, the project needed approval from a structural engineer. Minor adjustments were made, like bringing the height down so the patio could indeed be mobile, before receiving the green light. The duo chose to use a light weight material, coroplast for the roof of the Canopy, and recycled decking material for the benches which they felt fit well with the recycled nature of the roll-off itself.

For Cedarleaf, for whom this would be her first public arts project, working with Wasson Valle lessened the learning curve, while still giving her plenty of space to grow her

skills. "Getting to work with someone who has done a public art project of this scale essentially, I learned a lot from him and the process," she says. As it would turn out, Wasson Valle and his wife, also an artist, had received another commission to work on a large scale installation due around the same time as Downtown Tempe's project. This meant that Cedarleaf would have to take the lead on The Sound Canopy, with Wasson Valle working as a supporting artist; providing advice and technical support while she executed the actual creation of the Canopy.

There were challenges but there was also immense support for Cedarleaf as the lead artist. Kent, had the duo check in with her weekly for the duration of the project, monitoring timelines and progress. As a class, students volunteered their expertise and skills to the project and also used class time to help construct pieces of the Canopy. Cedarleaf assembled a core team that would see the project through; there was Austin Shepard, a talented metal worker who was hired to do all of the welding; Yousef Alroumi, a Master of Architecture student who "showed up everyday and helped Caralie," according to Wasson Valle; Nate Clark, a graduate student in Sculpture who loaned his expertise; Ed Wong, a volunteer from the Tempe Center for the Arts who gave much of his time; and even Cedarleaf's husband and parents who loaned their hands to the project.

"It's impossible to get anything done by yourself on such a large scale," notes Wasson Valle. "It takes a village type of mentality to get it done, which is why we're working on a plaque that we can put up on the roll-off to include all the people that did assist. In the art world, a lot of the credit just goes to the main artist, I think it's important to include all of the people that helped you to get it done."



In early May, the project was nearing completion and Kent began to gear up for the launch. Downtown Tempe's initial plan had been to place the patio outside of a popular bar and restaurant with lots of foot traffic, but unforeseen utility work meant that they had to move both it and the launch to a quieter location. For the launch, Cedarleaf, had planned

musical performances with her parents under the Canopy. However, a few days before the big reveal, Cedarleaf's mother unexpectedly passed away, dealing a major blow to her family. The community that had built around the project gathered around her, pushing the launch out till she could be in attendance.

On June 1st, about 20 people gathered at The Sound Canopy on Mill Avenue for what should have been a brief 15 minute launch with remarks from Kent and short performances. The event, would end up taking over an hour as Cedarleaf and her father, aunt and uncle took to the stage in an emotionally uplifting tribute to her mother and a celebration of Cedarleaf and Wasson Valle's work. "My mum always had this goal of having a stage like this in the backyard," Cedarleaf says, holding back tears.

"My dad played the first song, it was a song they wrote and sang together. It was really special that he could still perform and my whole family could be there."

Wasson Valle adds, "The outpouring of love and support was really beautiful. We were there, I was there with my family. It was a really beautiful thing to be included in."

As the dry Arizona heat takes over for the summer, The Sound Canopy is taking a break. But Kent hopes to have more scheduled performances under it once temperatures cool. For Cedarleaf, her long term goal for the project was to, "elevate busking and have a space where new and veteran performers can put on a show just because they want to." The Canopy has also found a new home as a result of the launch; a business owner who saw the value of the mobile patio and expressed interest in having it moved to his business. This, was always the vision for Downtown Tempe, a patio that moved around downtown, attracting new interest to different areas and businesses.

"We were hoping that the businesses like it and then other businesses want it, that was one of our measurement tools." Kent states.

When asked about whether she would work on another public arts project, Cedarleaf is enthusiastic. "I definitely would do another one! I'm really looking forward to using this momentum and starting to do more projects like this."

From Creative Exchange. "Tempe's Sound Canopy; A Respite for Residents and Performers," by Kari Mugo, 2017 (<http://springboardexchange.org/tempes-sound-canopy-a-respite-for-residents-and-performers/>). Copyright 2017 by Springboard for the Arts. Reprinted with permission.

**PHOTO CREDIT: Page 42**

Downtown Tempe Authority. (2017). Tempe's Sound Canopy. Tempe, AZ.

Jesus Gutierrez. (2017). Tempe's Sound Canopy. Tempe, AZ.

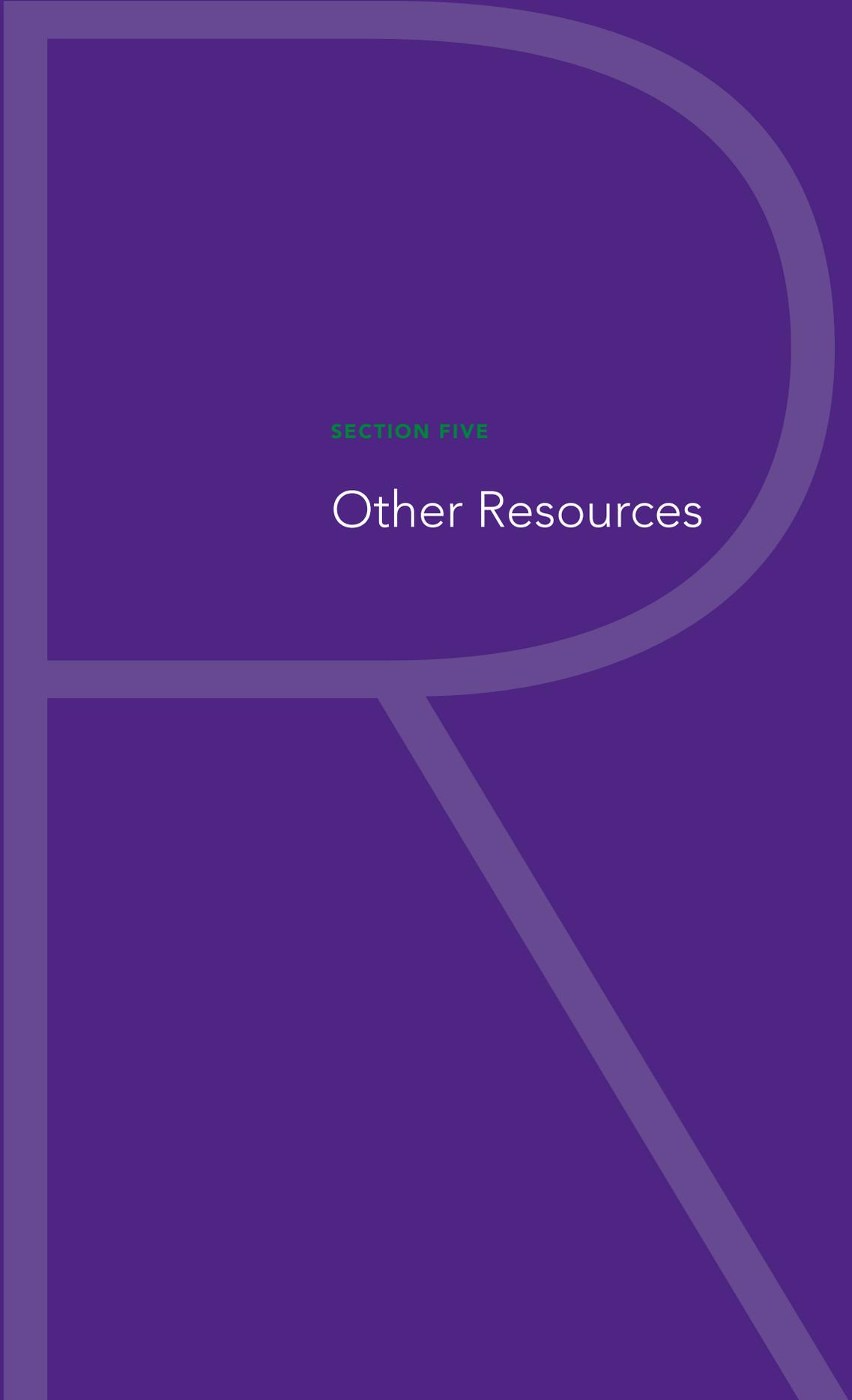
**PHOTO CREDIT: Page 43**

Downtown Tempe Authority. (2017). Tempe Sound Canopy Poster. Tempe, AZ.



**CHANDLER'S DOWNTOWN  
CROSSWALK BEAUTIFICATION**

DOWNTOWN CHANDLER  
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

A large, light purple, stylized letter 'R' graphic that serves as a background element. It is positioned on the left side of the page, with its vertical stem extending from the top to the bottom. The top curve of the 'R' is rounded and extends towards the right, framing the text.

SECTION FIVE

# Other Resources

# Other Resources

## FURTHER READING

For more ideas, resources and toolkits for artists and communities to catalyze change together, visit **Creative Exchange** ([www.springboardexchange.org](http://www.springboardexchange.org)).

Creative Exchange hosts practical toolkits like this one for creative, artist-led projects that you can use as inspiration, and online conversations where you can engage other practitioners around how to use the resources and adapt them to your community. Creative Exchange publishes case studies and profiles to share as inspirational stories of artists and their work. Check out the following stories about creative projects from the IDA network:

**ArtVenture connects the dots between visitors and public art in downtown Cincinnati**

<http://springboardexchange.org/artventurecincinnati/>

**The business community comes together to support the arts in downtown Fresno**

<http://springboardexchange.org/creativefresno/>

**Urban Matter Inc. creates interactive installations that combine technology, design, and community**

<http://springboardexchange.org/urbanmatterinc/>

## ATTRIBUTION NOTE

This toolkit is free, and we are excited for you to use it to create your own programming. If you do use the toolkit, we would be appreciative if you featured this language on your press releases, websites, promotional materials, etc.:

*This local project is modeled on the artist-led creative placemaking model developed by Springboard for the Arts.* A link back to our website would also be appreciated for any online presence:

**Springboard for the Arts:** [www.springboardforthearts.org](http://www.springboardforthearts.org)

**Creative Exchange:** [www.springboardexchange.org](http://www.springboardexchange.org)

**IDA Creative Placemaking:** <https://www.ida-downtown.org/eweb/dynamicpage.aspx?webcode=Springboard16>

## CONSULTING SERVICES

While this toolkit is free and intended to spark your idea, Springboard for the Arts is available for consulting services, depending on your interests and needs. Prices are determined based on the scope of work. Please contact us for additional information.

Services we provide include:

- Developing permanent, local artist resources & services in your community
- Creating non-traditional community partnerships
- Workshops, trainings and presentations
- Project management and advising

Be in touch at:

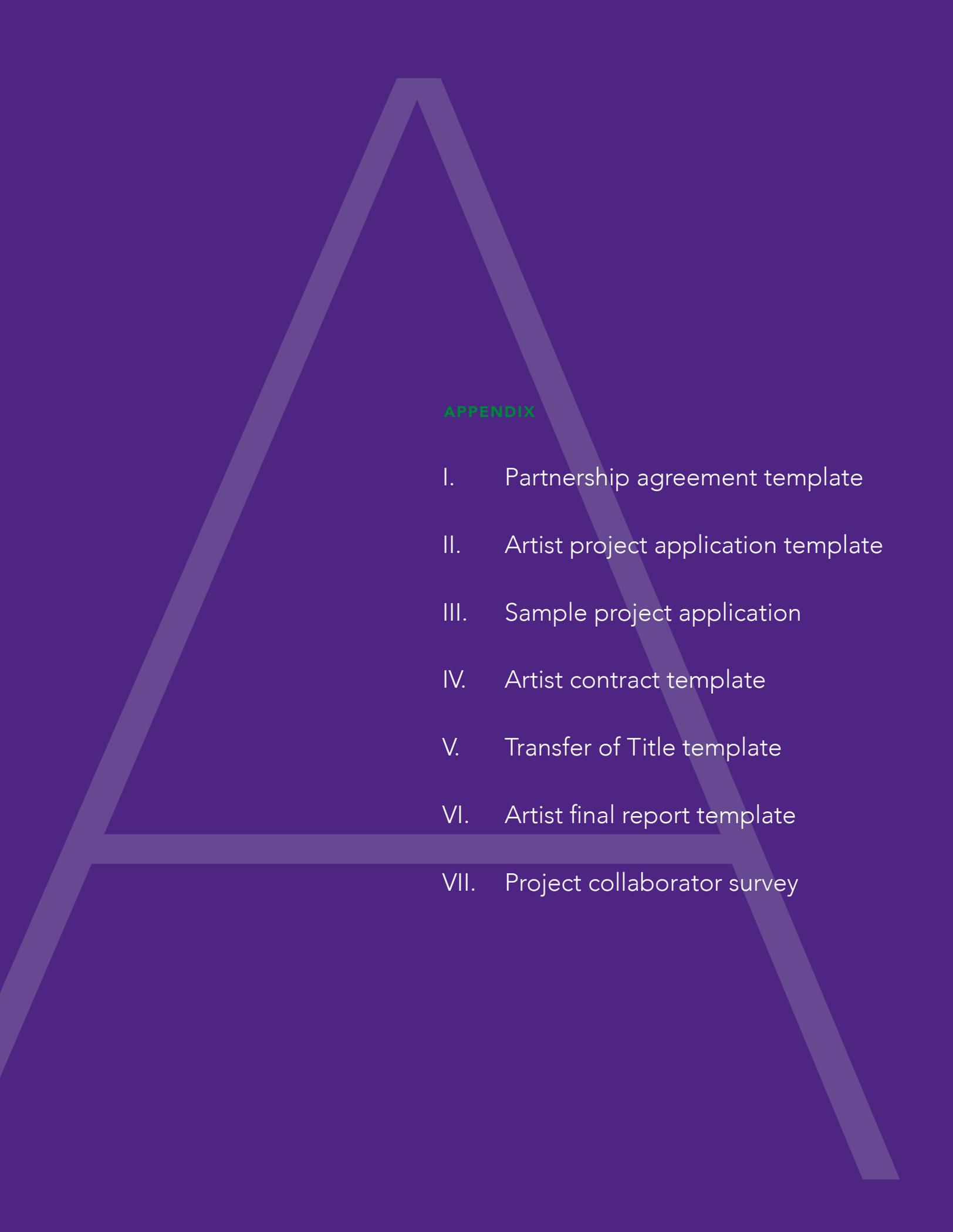
Springboard for the Arts

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## APPENDIX

- I. Partnership agreement template
- II. Artist project application template
- III. Sample project application
- IV. Artist contract template
- V. Transfer of Title template
- VI. Artist final report template
- VII. Project collaborator survey

# Partnership agreement template

Particularly if you are able to fund partners or collaborators, create an agreement with them. This template is for guidance only and may not cover your local laws.

## <LEAD ASSOCIATION> PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

<Lead association> and <Partner organization> (“Partner”) make this Partnership Agreement for purposes of implementing <name and basic description of program>.

Specific activities between <date> to <date> by the Partner shall be to:

- Assist in design of program and evaluation.
- Participate in artist selection process.
- Provide outreach and publicity to artists and district.
- Be resource, advisor and supporter to artist project collaborations.
- Provide program feedback.
- <Other appropriate/desired activities>

<Lead association> will provide:

- Leadership and overall coordination of program.
- Program outreach, publicity and feedback materials.
- Financial support for artist projects.
- Lead evaluation.
- <Other appropriate/desired activities>

<Lead association> agrees to pay Partner a fee of \$<amount> for the work specified above. <Lead association> agrees that it will pay Partner \$<half> at the time of execution of this agreement. Upon completion of Partner’s work described herein, by <date>, <Lead organization> agrees to pay Partner the remaining fee.

Either party may terminate this agreement with 2 weeks’ written notice. If the agreement is terminated, <Lead association> will prorate the Partner fee for the amount of work already provided.

The Partner is not an employee of <Lead association> and will not represent themselves as such.

The Partner agrees to indemnify, save, and hold <lead organization> their employees and representatives harmless from any and all claims or causes of action, including attorneys’ fees, arising from the performance of this Agreement.

This Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties. No modification of this Agreement shall be valid unless in writing and signed by both parties. Any waiver or modification of one part shall not effect the other portions of this agreement.

The laws of the State of <yours> shall govern this contract; any litigation shall be brought in the courts of that state.

Signed:

<Partner organization>:

<Lead organization>:

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Signature>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Signature>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Name, Title>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Date>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Name, Title>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Date>

# Artist project application template

*For modest-scale projects (generally under \$5000), keep the application process simple for your own sake and to recognize artists time involved at the front end without knowing if they will be selected.*

## <NAME OF OVERALL PROJECT> REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) / <DESCRIPTION OF TYPE OF PROJECTS SOUGHT>

Info session on <date>

Deadline for submissions: <date, time, year>

### Summary

Include:

- Any eligibility requirements
- Number of artists/projects selected
- Type of project sought (interactive, temporary, permanent, visual, etc.)
- Goal(s) of the projects
- Location/site parameters
- Dates (any event dates and by what date the project must be completed)
- Compensation

### Background

Explain context for these projects. Why now?

### Overall Project Summary

Explain in detail what the artist projects sought are about. This should work off of your background explanation. Include everything in your summary but with greater detail.

If your goals and parameters are very broad, you may want to include concrete examples of the range of project that could happen so that artists have a better sense of whether they would be eligible. If you are requiring work with business collaborators, include that here too.

### Artist project details

Clarify how the budget can be used – to pay for artist(s), materials, permits, etc.

Such as: Commissions of \$2000 each will include all aspects of the work; artist payment, research, design, community engagement, materials/supplies and creation of the artistic work.

Artists may work solo on this project or may work with multiple artists as a team that draws on different skills and mediums.

### Eligibility

Is this for local artists? Explain your definition of local. What other requirements do you have? This is a good place to say artists of all disciplines and backgrounds are eligible.

### Selection Criteria

Clearly state how proposals will be evaluated, for example:

- Strength of plan to meet project goals of <your project's stated goals>
- Quality and relevance of artist's past work as demonstrated in submitted materials.
- Collaboration process.
- Engagement of the public in creation of work.
- Feasibility/technical considerations.

### Selection Process

A committee made up of representatives from <your association, partner organizations, business community, arts community> will select artists/teams.

If proposal is selected, what the artist can expect in terms of being contacted, contracting, implementing their project, payments, etc.

### Application Process

Note: we use the free online service Dropbox for submissions. There are other fee-based programs such as submittable.com and Call for Entry ([www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org)) that may suit your needs.

Submit application materials as instructed below.

1. Create a free dropbox account using [www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)
  2. Create a dropbox folder titled <lastname\_firstname>
  3. Complete and compile items A-D listed below in the folder (Cover sheet, work samples etc.)
  3. Email a link to the folder to: <coordinator email address>
- For tutorial to email link: <https://www.dropbox.com/help/167/en>
4. You will receive confirmation of receipt within 1 week.

### <PROJECT NAME> APPLICATION

Your application should include:

**A. Cover Sheet:** Contact information (if multiple artists, note lead artist and list team members).

**B. Project Proposal :** Please answer the following questions in 2 pages or less. Use the below as section headings in your proposal.

1. Project title
2. Project summary
3. Project description including:
  - What do you plan to do?
  - What will the final product or process or art work be?
  - Who will you collaborate with?
  - How does your project meet the stated goals?
  - What, if any, are specific activities in or with the public?
  - What is the timeline?

**C. Budget:** Please provide a simple budget that may include:

- Your time, including how much are you paying yourself for the work
- Materials and expenses required to produce and install the art piece
- Miscellaneous expenses

**D. Resume:** Not to exceed two pages (can include resume for each artist if part of a team).

**E. Work Samples:** Up to eight examples of past artworks, or five minutes of video or audio of past work (if applying as a team, may submit up to 16 samples, regardless of how many team members). Digital files shall be in .jpg format with a resolution of 72 ppi with 1920 pixels on the longest side. Label images: 1\_ARTIST LAST NAME.jpg; 2\_ARTIST LAST NAME.jpg, 3\_ARTIST LAST NAME.jpg and so forth. Applicants choosing to submit sample types other than images should use the following guidelines:

1 image = 30 seconds of video/audio = half a page of written work (poetry, prose, fiction, etc.)

**F. Work Samples Narrative:** Describe the work and including: title of artwork, video or audio work and year completed; if artwork, then materials; dimensions; location where installed, etc. (150 word limit per work sample).

# Artist contract template

*This template is for guidance only and may not cover your local laws.*

## <PROJECT NAME> PROJECT AGREEMENT

This agreement has been entered into on <date> by and between <Business association> (hereafter referred to as \_\_\_\_\_) and <Name> (hereafter referred to as Artist) for purposes of implementing <Title of Project/Activity> (Project).

### 1. Roles and Responsibilities of Artist

Examples:

- a. Artist is responsible for implementing Project (as detailed below/or in attached proposal), in conjunction with project team and collaborators.
- b. Artist completes Project by <date>.
- c. Artist provides project updates especially regarding events and activities to which public is invited in order to facilitate promotion of them.
- d. Artist is responsible for arranging any desired insurance coverage. Artist assumes all risk of loss and damage to the Project from any cause, and agrees to hold <commissioning body> harmless for loss or damage from any cause.
- e. Artist is responsible for upkeep and maintenance of any physical portions of the Project. <commissioning body> will make no alterations, repairs or maintenance to the Project.
- f. Any significant changes or alterations to Project and/or timeline must be approved by <commissioning body>.

### 2. Roles and Responsibilities of <Business association>

Examples:

- a. Assistance, when requested, in supporting implementation of Project on a best-effort basis.
- b. Promotion of Project through online resources, social media, and other networks.
- c. Provision of promotional materials for distribution by Artist in conjunction with Project, if appropriate.

### 3. Copyright

Artist retains copyright over any art produced as part of the Project.

### 4. Documentation

Artist agrees to permit <Business association> and its designated personnel to photograph, video and document the Project, and use resulting materials without restrictions or royalties paid to the Artist or <Business association> for archival, promotional, marketing, website, educational and such other purposes as <Business association> shall determine. Such photographic and documentary materials shall be the property of <Business association>.

### 5. Fees

<Business association> agrees to pay Artist a fee of <\$000.00> for the work specified above. <Business association> agrees that it will pay Artist two thirds of the total fee, <\$00.00> upon execution of this agreement. Upon completion of Artist's Project and submission of final report, <Business association> agrees to pay Artist the remaining fee of <\$00.00>

### 6. Employment

The Artist is not an employee of <Business association> and will not represent themselves as such.

### 7. Hold Harmless

The Artist agrees to indemnify, save, and hold <Business association>, their employees and representatives harmless from any and all claims or causes of action, including attorneys' fees, arising from the performance of this Agreement.

**8. Entire Agreement**

This Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties. No modification of this Agreement shall be valid unless in writing and signed by both parties. Any waiver or modification of one part shall not effect the other portions of this agreement.

**9. Governing Law**

The laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_ shall govern this contract; any litigation shall be brought in the courts of that state.

<Artist name>:

<Business Association>:

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Signature>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Signature>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Name, Title>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Date>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Name, Title>

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Date>



Artist Nick Clausen filmed the Iny Asian Dance Theater performing traditional dances and then projected the video on the windows of the vacant Victoria Theater along University Avenue. Photo courtesy of Irrigate.

# Transfer of Title template

*This template is for guidance only and may not cover your local laws.*

## TRANSFER OF TITLE

FOR VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the undersigned Artist located at the address noted below does hereby sell, transfer and convey to <Business association>, located in <City, State>, its assigns and successors, all rights, title and interest in the ownership of the Artwork commissioned by <Business association> as described in the agreement between the parties.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Artist has executed this written transfer of title on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
ARTIST

\_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
WITNESS

Sworn to and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

(NOTARY SEAL)

# Artist final report template

## <PROJECT NAME> PROJECT FINAL REPORT

### Checklist:

- Final report
- 3-10 images (jpg)
- Submit all materials to <email of program coordinator>

After submission of final report and images, your final payment will be processed and mailed to you. This may take up to <timeframe>.

Images: Submit 3-10 images with your final report, in the highest resolution that you have, on CD or emailed.

1. Artists name(s)
2. Project title
3. Summarize the project – what did you do?
4. Estimate the number of people involved in your project – those working on it directly with you (planning, implementation, coordination) and those who participated/attended (if you had an event).  
  
Directly involved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Participants/Attendees: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did you develop new skills, capacity or connections through this process? What might you do with them in the future?
6. Were there unexpected results? In the artwork, in the relationship(s), etc? Describe.
7. Are you more or less inclined to undertake another cross-sector collaboration (unrelated to this program) after this experience? Would you be interested in collaborating with businesses/business districts? Why?
8. Are there any other thoughts, feedback, comments that you would like to share?

# Project collaborator survey sample

*This survey is designed in an interview format - for a person to directly ask the business collaborator – which gives you an opportunity to learn more nuanced and useful information and to build rapport. Set up an excel file for entering responses so that you can tabulate and compare them more easily.*

## <PROJECT NAME> COLLABORATOR SURVEY

Instructions for survey administrator:

- Surveys to be conducted verbally in-person or by phone.
- You will write the notes into the survey spreadsheet.
- Prepare by reviewing project summary.
- There are two versions of similar questions; use the set that make sense of the collaborator (business or organization)

Goals for this survey are to learn:

- Are collaborators satisfied with their experience?
- <Other information related to program goals>
- Has collaborator perception of art and artists changed?

Introduction after finding right person to speak with:

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_, working for <Business association> and the <Program name>. Recently, artist(s) <names> worked with you on a project <title>. Do you have 5 minutes to take a survey that will help us improve the program?

If this is not a good time, when could I call you back? (If they sound like they'd be more likely to answer if someone showed up in person, find out when they're most likely to be available and say you will try to send someone over but you will confirm it with them – giving you time to see if you <or other project coordinator> can stop by.)

Great. I'll start the survey questions now.

### Survey questions:

1. Collaborator (whomever you are talking to): name, position, business/organization
2. How was this project valuable to your <business/organization>?

Check all that apply.

#### If a business:

- Exposure to new customers/clients? Y/N
  - **If yes** - Approximately how many? \_\_\_\_\_
- Sales revenue increased?
  - **If yes** - By how much? (compare equivalent night/timeframe/season, percent, actual amount, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Community buzz/attention (news articles, online, word-of-mouth, etc.)
- Other? (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### If a non-profit organization:

- Exposure to new participants/clients? Y/N
  - **If yes** - Approximately how many? \_\_\_\_\_
- If org/group sells anything, sales revenue increased? Y/N
  - **If yes** - By how much? (compare equivalent timeframe/season, percent or actual amount)? \_\_\_\_\_
- Community buzz/attention (news articles, online, word-of-mouth, etc.)? Y/N

- o Further the goals of your organization/group's mission? Y/N
- o Existing/regular participants/clients enjoyed it? Y/N
- o Project makes place/org/group stand out? Y/N
- o Other? (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you feel about this project? (If they have offered many thoughts in the "other" section above, acknowledge that, and ask if they have any addition feelings about project.)

4. Previous to this experience/project with a <Program name> Artist, had your <business/organization> worked with an artist? Y/N

5. Are you more or less likely to work with artists after this experience? More/less.

If more –

- Please describe what you might seek an artist for?
- Would you pay for this type of service for your <business/org/group>? Y/N
- If you wanted to work with an artist again, do you know how to find one? Y/N

If less -

- Why?

6. After this, has your understanding or view of what art and artists do changed? How?

7. Thank you for taking the time to share your answers. If we have additional questions in the future, may we contact you again? Y/N

Survey taker observations:

- Is person & story interesting, potentially worth capturing more of the story?
- Would person be inclined to share more details?
- Anything else of note to think about or pursue?

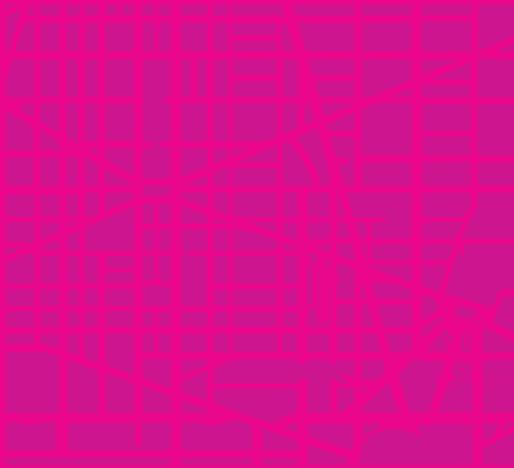


Artists Tsimbina Andrianaivo, Bob Yang, and Kaocheeia Vang (SoulLections) serenaded the audience with neo-soul, jazz, R&B, bossanova at the Vietnamese restaurant, Mai Village. Photo by Peter Haakon Thompson.



## MAIN STREET SOUNDS

DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS COMMISSION



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