

CREATIVE CITYMAKING

In Search of the New Village

by William Cleveland



Summary

In 2013 the City of Minneapolis and Intermedia Arts collaborated on **Creative CityMaking (CCM)**, a program aimed at integrating creative placemaking strategies, processes, and thinking into the ongoing operations of City Departments. The program paired artists and city planners to work on five active planning projects. Functioning within the city's Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED), this collaboration was designed to give artists and planners an opportunity to explore new ways to involve citizens who had not been typically involved in the planning process.

Over the course of the year-long CCM initiative, the artist-planner teams created 22 different arts-based tools and strategies designed to stimulate learning and dialogue about possible community futures and assets. The resulting citizen input, shared in the form of chalkboard questions, street-side theater, zine questionnaires, community journals, drawings, classroom dialogues, community discussion groups, impromptu interviews, happy hour conversations, video diaries, and more appreciably expanded the range and variety of community voices available to city planners. More importantly, it also established the foundation of learning and collaboration that is supporting the program's current expansion of Creative CityMaking into five city departments.

Cover photo: The Penn Avenue Small Area Plan Creative CityMaking team with artists Ashley Hanson and Wing Young Huie, and planner Jim Voll developed a wide range of engagement tools to gather community input for the Penn Ave plan on the street. They engaged with people at dozens of locations include bus stops and pop-up galleries along the corridor with a variety of tools soliciting community ideas, thoughts, and dreams on chalk boards and through games like Bus Stop Jeopardy and documenting the input through photography. They engaged hundreds of individuals in the public realm over the course of the project.

Singing In the Rain

A dozen or so people sporting dripping rain gear and shiny umbrellas huddle and shuffle unconsciously around the Metro bus stop at the North Minneapolis intersection of Penn and 44th Avenue North.

Two teenage boys and a girl, along with an older woman, begin arranging themselves in a line along the back edge of the puddled sidewalk. Each of the teens raises a placard featuring a single word. They read: "Rebuild," "Green," "Reinvest."

Though they are smiling, the kids seem nervous. But when they break into a call and response chant they have everyone's attention. The exchange is suggestive of an old school military marching cadence, but the words are very different:

"I don't know but its been said / The North side is a thing to dread"

"I don't know but you will see / The North side is beloved to me"

"I don't know but I've been told / the neighborhood we shall uphold"

When the rhyming ends, the older woman turns to her younger associates with a question: "From this corner all the way down to the Olson Highway, what are some of the things you would like to see that could revitalize this neighborhood?"

The tallest boy immediately responds: "Well, I would like to see some more businesses open up!"

The other boy picks up the thought: "...like some cool quiet restaurant with a patio where I can dine alfresco."

As a chuckle ripples through the audience, the girl jumps out in front. "I want to see coffee shops, and flower shops, and ice cream parlors."

The tall boy raises his hand, waits a beat, and steps forward. "Yea, but no more liquor stores!"

All three young people punctuate the statement with a headshaking chorus of "Nooooooo."

These street theatrics continue a few more minutes until the bus arrives and everybody, including the sidewalk ensemble, piles in.

To a casual observer this scene would probably register as some kind of street theater protest, or demonstration aimed at a group of bus patrons. But they would be wrong. This plucky, rain soaked performance is in fact a community planning meeting co-convened by the City of Minneapolis' Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) department, its Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (ACCE) program, and a pioneering community arts organization called Intermedia Arts.

Beginnings

Creative Placemaking

This unlikely juxtaposition of theater and planning was a small part of a larger joint venture between the City and Intermedia Arts that by year's end had engaged thousands of citizens in dozens of Minneapolis neighborhoods in similarly unusual, but remarkably revealing exchanges about key community issues. This unique story had its genesis almost two years earlier when Intermedia's Executive Director, Theresa Sweetland, placed a call to the City's ACCE program Director, Gülgün Kayim. Theresa had been looking at the guidelines for a new national funding program called ArtPlace that she felt offered an intriguing opportunity for a possible collaboration between Intermedia and the city of Minneapolis.

The ArtPlace funding program had been the brainchild of then Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Rocco Landesman. Landesman's initiative, inspired by a white paper by Minnesota researchers Ann Markesun and Ann Gadwa¹, reflected his strong belief that if the arts were going to thrive in a recession-weakened America, then they would have to be seen as a stimulus for economic development. Landesman also knew that any new initiative at the cash-strapped NEA would have to be financed with private dollars.

With the help of Ford Foundation President, Louis Ubinas, Landesman formed a consortium of eleven private foundations that agreed to contribute funds for a new program that would support arts organizations working in the realm of community and economic development. Using the term advanced by Markesun and Gadwa, the NEA described ArtPlace's development approach as "creative placemaking."

For many arts organizations, this was a fairly new proposition. But Intermedia Arts is not a typical arts organization. Although the one time car repair shop that houses their programs contains a theater and a gallery, and they regularly present performances and exhibitions, Intermedia defines itself as advancing art-making that helps "build healthy, capable, and equitable communities." Programmatically, this translates as support for a broad spectrum of artists, organizations, and community developers who use arts-based approaches to address the social, political, and economic issues facing communities in and around the Twin Cities. Given Intermedia's unique approach to art-making, Theresa Sweetland saw ArtPlace as an opportunity for Intermedia to apply its already significant expertise as "creative placemakers," and possibly stretch its wings.

Although new to her job at the City, Gülgün Kayim was no stranger to the community arts arena. Throughout her long career as an interdisciplinary artist and arts administrator, Gülgün had explored how public art and a community's culture and story can be employed as tools for reconciliation and community building. As a program officer at the Archibald Bush Foundation she also was involved in the development of Intermedia's Creative Community Leadership Institute (CCLI). Now, as Minneapolis' first ACCE director, she had the opportunity to help shape the City's approach to what was now being called "creative placemaking." She recalls her initial conversation with Theresa Sweetland about ArtPlace as an "exciting discussion of *what-ifs?*"

"We were just talking and processing. I had seen a recommendation for an artist residency program in the city's 2005 plan for Arts and Culture. We came on this idea of CCLI and resident artists within the city. What would that look like? We were looking at all the ingredients."

1 [Creative Placemaking](#), A Markesun, A, Gadwa, The Mayors' Institute on City Design, National Endowment for the Arts, 2010

Creative CityMaking

The ArtPlace guidelines on Theresa's desk reflected Landesman's emphasis on economic development as a means of sustaining the arts. The NEA was looking for "initiatives involving arts organizations, artists, and designers working in partnership with local and national partners." Considering the source of the guidelines, the relevant subject areas were quite broad. The proposal included: "economic development, transportation, neighborhood development, entrepreneurship, sustainability and health."² The NEA guidelines also placed a strong emphasis on projects that increased community "vibrancy³ and diversity."⁴ Priority would be given to projects with experienced partners who brought innovative arts-based approaches that could be integrated into a broader portfolio of strategies powerful enough to transform the community.

Over the next several weeks, Theresa and Gülgün began honing their ideas into what they knew would need to be a particularly compelling proposal. They also enlisted the sage advice of Mary Altman, a respected arts administrator who had been at the helm of the City's Public Arts program for nearly two decades. All three agreed early on that the sweet spot within Minneapolis for a project of this type was the City's Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Department.

Here was a municipal department whose job was to explore the City's future with and for its citizens. Its planning portfolio in such areas as transportation, land use, economic development, and environmental issues aligned well with the ArtPlace priorities. And CPED's "people oriented planning" approach, already in practice, was regarded as an inherently creative process aimed at translating and distilling disparate ideas and possibilities into a coherent whole.

After discussions with Gülgün and Theresa, Mary, who was the City of Minneapolis Public Arts Administrator, enthusiastically joined in what was now being referred to as the Creative CityMaking initiative (CCM). Gülgün recalls that the planning department was so excited about the concept that they were encouraged to "think bigger" in their crafting of the proposal. The Planning Manager was particularly keen to explore ways to diversify participation in the community input processes that are an essential feature of effective neighborhood planning. This, and the department's previously positive experience with resident artist Seitu Jones, convinced Gülgün that both the moment, and her team of planners were particularly ripe for the Intermedia collaboration.

The Creative CityMaking proposal outlined a partnership between the City of Minneapolis and Intermedia Arts aimed at integrating new creative strategies

Creative Citymaking Goals:

- The creation of a collaborative laboratory and learning environment that engages artists and City staff working with a City department
- The development of new creative strategies for community planning
- The provision of new tools to artists and planners for community engagement and working with traditionally under-represented communities
- The engagement of artists in critical thinking and art-making around the City and urban issues, and to increase artists' and planners' ability to facilitate community change
- The documentation and communication of lessons learned

² *ArtPlace Invitation for a Letter of Inquiry*, NEA, Sept. 2012, Washington D.C.

³ NEA ArtPlace guidelines defined vibrancy as "The synergy among people, activity, and value in a place that increases community vitality and spurs economic opportunity."

⁴ Diversity: Heterogeneity of people in terms of income, race and ethnicity through an inclusive and connected place.

for community planning and engagement into CPED's continuing work. This was to be facilitated by pairing artists and planners with five active city planning projects over a year's time. These projects would be chosen based on their potential for involving community members and artists at multiple points in the planning process. Another key component was a series of five scheduled convenings for training, sharing, and exchange among the artist/planner teams and other key staff from the partner organizations. These day-and-a-half long "institutes" would be modeled after Intermedia's decade-long creative leadership training experience with CCLI.

One of the proposal's most striking characteristics was its uncomplicated work plan. The plan essentially provided a container for artists and planners to learn from and influence each other in an effort to engage a fresh cohort of citizens in the City's planning—particularly citizens who had not been typically involved in planning. Intermedia's Associate Director, Julie Bates, reflects back that the project's simplicity was a given, due to the fact that "nothing like it had ever been done at the city before. We really had no blueprint."

Photo by: Justin Sengly



Dinkytown USA

Sam is a serious bike rider. If the weather is fair and the streets are clear he prefers two wheels to four. This morning he is pedaling hard, but not at his usual swift pace. His struggle is not a matter of gravity—there are almost no hills in Minneapolis, particularly in Dinkytown, where he is navigating the crowded streets next to the University of Minnesota campus. No, Sam is straining because of what he is pulling. It looks like a big black packing crate on wheels, or maybe, because it has doors, it's a mobile armoire.

Whatever it is, the thing is at least a foot taller than Sam and about as long as the thin-tube bike he is pedaling. On the right side of the slow moving monolith is a white line drawing of a simple townscape underscored by the words. "Dinkytown USA."

As Sam turns into the sprawling campus he catches sight of his Creative CityMaking partners, Roger and Caroline, waiting by the student union. After he wheels over, they all set to work turning the big black box into what they have dubbed the "Mobile Engagement Theater."

Peeling back the box's doors, Sam reveals a large poster. It says, "Dinkytown USA." He grabs hold of a crank handle underneath and turns. The poster slides to the left and is quickly replaced by a series of maps and old photos. The legend reads "Dinkytown Existing Land Use." He smiles and turns to Caroline and Roger, "Looks like its still working."

By now their arrival and the transformation of the box has attracted a small crowd of students. As they continue their set up, Sam addresses their audience.

"Hey folks. Listen up. Like the sign says, we are artists working on a project called Creative CityMaking. We are partnering with the city's planning department on what is called a Small Area Plan. Put simply, we are here to find out what you think about your neighborhood and its future. We are biking around campus, stopping, talking, and educating people about the history of Dinkytown."

Caroline jumps in.

"We are also here trying to amplify the voices of people who really have a connection to Dinkytown and to ask them about their ideas regarding the future of their community."

With that she reaches up and grabs a handful of little pamphlets off a shelf in the back of the cart and begins distributing them.

"This little zine I have here asks you to give your input for the Dinkytown Small Area Plan—we want to hear from you about what you would like to see happen in Dinkytown."

Photo left: Dinkytown is a small four-block area along the north side of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities East Bank campus occupied by a variety of small businesses and apartment buildings mostly housing university students. Currently zoned for small-scale neighborhood commercial uses, the area has been experiencing significant growth in response to a student-housing gap. These changes are driving ideas and concerns about the future, as well as the area's first community planning process, the Dinkytown Small Area Plan. The team worked to engage hundreds of students from the adjacent UofM campus in the planning process through a series of engagement tactics including a graphic community survey, a mobile engagement theater, and artist-designed t-shirts with a Dinkytown logo as an incentive to engage.

Planners and Artists

Intermedia Arts received notice of their ArtPlace grant award in August of 2012. With that, what was a speculative partnership with the City built on a foundation of “what-ifs,” immediately became a fast moving train with an imposing array of definitive benchmarks and deadlines. The small group of collaborators from the City and Intermedia understood that turning their untested “concept” into a functional reality was going to be an exciting—and possibly daunting—challenge. The payoff was the opportunity it offered to establish arts-based community development as a powerful and useful tool in the potentially influential public arena.

The Creative CityMaking team of public servants and arts professionals also took comfort in the fact the project’s central purpose was something they all knew quite well—building productive relationships in service to the greater good. Fundamentally, Creative CityMaking was a framework fashioned to support a network of overlapping relationships that would, hopefully, stimulate meaningful listening and learning relationships among Intermedia, the City’s planning department, the City’s citizens, and ultimately its government. The artists and planners would be the vital center of this web, and the project’s success would depend on the quality of each of those connections.

One of the first steps Intermedia took was to hire Carrie Christensen as the Creative CityMaking Program Manager. Carrie, trained as an environmental designer and planner and a graduate of the 2011 CCLI, would be responsible for coordinating the project’s day-to-day operation and function as liaison between Intermedia and the City. Her experience working with both artists and planners on a variety of projects prepared her for, and made her a good choice for, the unique challenge of stewarding the cross-sector partnership.

“How would an artist describe an orange, how would a planner? What are its uses? The metaphor is clear, of course. How would an artist describe a city or community and how would a planner? What do we each see when we look at the same subject? What are our points of view?”

—CCM Artist

The first opportunity the City’s planning staff had to interact with their creative partners came during the artist selection process. By the middle of November, Intermedia had received over fifty applications in response to a call for artists. This is not surprising given the uniqueness of a paid, year-long artist residency and an opportunity to “integrate creative activities, ideas and tools into planning processes.” After an extensive review by the artist selection jury, the finalists, some of whom were in teams, were invited to interview at the Minneapolis Central Library.

Each of the applicants were given a few minutes to share their backgrounds and ideas with a panel consisting of a mix of public art professionals, artists, community members, and City staff, including Jack Byers who had just taken over as the Interim Director of CPED. A number of planners, who were also in attendance, were invited to ask questions. It was clear from exchanges between the artists and the planners that they were both enthusiastic and, not surprisingly, had a lot to learn from each other. Julie Bates recalls her own learning: “This was the first time I’d met the city’s planners. They came in and they were obviously a team. From their comments and questions it was clear that they really took pride in their civil service mission. I had expected a certain level of passion and idealism from the artists, but I had no idea about the planners. In the end, I could see that they had a lot in common.”

Following the interviews, Jack Byers sat down with his team and paired the artists recommended by the panel with five planning projects that they felt matched up best with their skills and interests. After hearing from the artists during the selection process, CPED’s planners were even more interested in being involved in the project, but unfortunately, there weren’t enough projects to accommodate all of them.

In late December, the first of the five scheduled Creative CityMaking convenings was held at Intermedia Arts. The meeting, facilitated by CCLI faculty members, Erik Takeshita and Wendy Morris, focused on introducing the artists and planners to each other and orienting everyone to the general framework that had been developed to support their collaborations. Wendy kicked off the day by inviting everyone to join her in some movement exercises, which she said might help them “become present in the room.” When they were done, the artists and planners settled into a circle of chairs set up on the Intermedia stage.

After reviewing the day’s agenda, Erik invited each person to share something about themselves with members of the circle. Thinking back, Wendy noticed two striking things as the stories unfolded: “First was the incredible variety of experiences represented in the circle, and second was how difficult it was to keep people in the neat “artist” or “planner” categories that they had walked in the room with.”

Later in the day, Wendy placed an orange on the floor in the middle of the circle. She asked everyone to put pen to paper and describe the orange—first from the perspective of an artist, and then as a planner. As various members of the circle shared what they had written it became obvious once again that there was little or no difference among the various readers. Artists and planners were coming from a very similar place.

Needless to say, the movement exercise, the circle of chairs, and the orange were not typical meeting protocols for the city hall contingent. But there was a growing understanding in the Creative CityMaking circle that initiative was going to be broaching new territories for everyone involved.



Artist Diane Willow traced the feet of Mayor RT Rybak and used the tracing as a template for her **Rolling Foot Cam**—a camera attached to a life-sized pair of sculptural feet attached to a wheel and guided with a long handle. Created in response to a proposed 14-mile light rail line connecting downtown Minneapolis to the southwest suburbs, this Creative CityMaking effort asked community members to use the Foot Cam to record the ground view of proposed pathways and trails in the area surrounding proposed light rail station sites, integrating them into the planning process.

Photo by: Carrie Christensen

Ten Months - Five Stories

ONE: Hitting the Streets

Artists Roger Cummings, Samuel Babatunde Ero-Phillips, and Caroline Kent started their Creative CityMaking journey in January of 2013, working in the Southwest Minneapolis neighborhood of Linden Hills with planner Brian Schaeffer. Like their eventual second engagement in Dinkytown, the project's focus was on the development of a Small Area Plan, with a major difference; the planning in Linden Hills had already begun in August of 2012. True to its name, Small Area Plans are intended to provide a long-term (15-20 year) vision for land use and development in a clearly defined geographic area, like a neighborhood or historic business district.

The three artists, Roger, Sam, and Caroline, had applied as a team, having worked together in similar neighborhood arts initiatives at Juxtaposition Arts (JUXTA); a highly regarded youth-oriented visual art center known for community collaborations, studio classes and workshops, public mural programs, and art exhibitions located in North Minneapolis. Brian, a 7-year veteran of the planning department, appreciated the unique combination of expertise and experience they brought to the effort.

“We see community engagement going hand-in-hand with education. Being able to educate...a process of identifying the results and then having a dialogue.”

—CCM Artist

All three artists had both visual arts backgrounds and extensive community engagement experience, particularly with young people. For this reason, the team agreed that engaging local youth, who are not normally involved in city planning, would be a good place to focus their efforts. Their orientation at JUXTA had always been that education and community engagement “go hand in hand.” They also shared the belief that effective citizen involvement should lead to some sense of ownership among participants, particularly with youth. Given this and the challenges of engaging community during the Minnesota winter, the local high school (Southwest) seemed a good place to start.

It's no surprise that Southwest High School embraced the opportunity to participate in the Creative CityMaking initiative given its motto: “Inspiring excellence in arts and academics.” Working with one of the school's arts faculty, Roger and Caroline developed a set of lesson plans designed to capture information from students that directly related to the Small Area Plan. The curriculum they created also introduced the students to some of the concepts behind the City's “people oriented planning” approach.

In one exercise, students worked on individual paintings about what they cherished about the community and how they wanted it to evolve in the future. Then, after being told to swap paintings they were given permission to change some small aspect of their fellow student's creation. Following this, they were asked to consider additional modifications, but this time engage the painting's creator about whether or not they should make the changes. In the follow-up discussion, students talked about the nature of change and the difference between being consulted and having things imposed.

The team felt good about their work at the school, but also knew they needed to hear from other segments of the community. In these circumstances, the planning department typically employed surveys and questionnaires to garner community input. Now, planners had the prospect of developing new ways to elicit people's ideas and concerns about the future as part of the Creative CityMaking partnership.

One alternative tool the team came up with was a zine that allowed the team to explore traditional planning territory, but in a very different manner. Although the small, image-filled, 4.25x5.5 inch publication posed typical planning questions, the team found that community members responded enthusiastically to the zine concept. The result was a win-win for the team because like a traditional survey the input that was collected could be tabulated and combined with other data in the community planning process. The team's progress was promising.

However, as spring arrived, the Linden Hills Small Area Planning process stalled due to disagreements between the community and the planning department. This impasse contributed to a decision by the team not to share the work of the artists, students, and other participants in a neighborhood exhibition planned for that spring. Although disappointing, this interruption presented Sam, Caroline, and Roger with an opportunity to join planner Haila Maze in the development of the Small Area Plan for the Dinkytown neighborhood located on the north side of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities East Bank campus.

“The zine engaged people at a different level and is a tool that is scalable. The artist residency at the high school is an interesting way to engage students. Typically, the voices we hear are not youth voices.”

—City Planner

TWO: Dinkytown USA

Although Dinkytown is nominally only a 4-block area, it has a significant presence, functioning as the principal intersection of urban and university culture in the Twin Cities. Historically, the area has maintained a diverse mix of music, food establishments, and cheap housing that exudes an energy and vibrancy that many feel is unique. More recently, development projects were seen by some to be producing changes that they felt were altering the character of the neighborhood. This reality catalyzed the interest of people who live and work in Dinkytown about what would happen next.

The Dinkytown Small Area Planning process was initiated to facilitate this community dialogue. Early on in the team's collaboration, they met to discuss strategies that would capture the attention of Dinkytown's unique mix of students and long time residents. During the discussion, Haila offered an example she thought might inform their design process. During a recent visit to an agricultural science fair that had very low attendance, she noticed one booth that was drawing huge crowds. This particular exhibit was so popular because it offered attendees an opportunity to have their picture taken with a live llama that was then posted to Facebook. From that point on the team made creating something provocative and fun, “like the llama,” as their design focus.

The Mobile Engagement Theater (MET), described earlier in this article, was the result. The Dinkytown artist/planner team saw it as a great way to capture the attention and voices of people who are young, on the move, and not typically part of the planning conversation. The Theater was designed by Sam and his environmental design class at Juxtaposition Arts. According to Sam, the experience was a great opportunity to expose his students to the process of “bringing design to life.”

The students also designed logos for both the Theater and t-shirts that were created for the project. Over the course of the summer, hundreds of Dinkytown community members joined the MET audience to share their issues and ideas about their community. Their perspectives were documented through the same type of zine questionnaire that was developed for Linden Hills. This zine data and the discussions stimulated through interaction with the MET provided input that was quantified and combined with the other sources of data gathered for the plan.

In September, Haila approached Dinkytown's Varsity Theatre about hosting a public meeting to share the information that the team had gathered during the summer. The meeting, which took place in October, gave an audience of 120 community members an opportunity to learn about and comment on the MET, and other Small Area Plan results. The presentation also included a short documentary called *Dinkytown USA*⁵ that told the story of the MET's journey through the community. That winter, the MET information was integrated into the Dinkytown Small Area Plan that was presented to the Minneapolis Planning Commission and City Council in early 2014.

THREE: Tracing History

In addition to being the larger of the Twin Cities, Minneapolis is also seen as having the more “modern” cityscape. This is largely due to the redevelopment undertaken during 1960's, 70's, and 80's that replaced many of the city's historic areas with dozens of office complexes that now define the Minneapolis skyline. This does not mean that the city is devoid of historic buildings. In fact, over the past 15 years, the city's planners, along with the State Historic Preservation Office have compiled a list of over 10,000 structures they have identified as potentially historic. In 2012, the City embarked on an effort to analyze and assess the combined findings of twelve different building surveys that comprise this database. Called the Historic Capstone Project, the effort also aimed to stimulate public awareness and involvement in discussions about preservation policy and development opportunities in the City for the coming generation.

“It is our hope that these tools can be shared and used again and again in the process of informing City Planning and any planning in a community that could potentially use them.”

—CCM Artist

As part of the Creative CityMaking partnership, visual artist and graphic designer, Witt Siasoco worked with city planner Joe Bernard, to create a public engagement campaign about this rich source of information on the City's history. As they began their collaboration, both team members were acutely aware that historic preservation was not a high priority for many of the City's residents. They agreed though, that given Witt's extensive experience working with youth,⁶ focusing on young people of color would allow them to both engage an underrepresented group and provide a valuable focus for their partnership. With this, their goal became increasing youth awareness of the process and impact of “historic preservation.”

The design process for the Capstone project started in early 2014. Witt led the way brainstorming ideas, with Joe taking the role of adviser to assure the work made sense from the City's perspective. The team met every other week to go over progress and discuss new ideas. At various points, they brought in additional players for specific activities. For example, the Minnesota Historical Society helped provide neighborhood history and visual images for art-making as well as allowing access to the Mill City Museum. Witt brought in arts educator and printmaker, Mischa Kegan, to help with some work involving young people.

⁵ [Dinkytown USA](#)

⁶ For over a decade, Siasoco worked with the Walker Art Center Teen Arts Council (WACTAC), a visionary program designed to connect teenagers with contemporary art and artists. Siasoco also served as the Arts Coordinator at the Canvas, a youth-run teen arts center.

In early Spring, the team settled on a project design with three unique but interrelated parts. The first was an Art, Architecture, and Urban Planning curriculum created by Joe and Witt that was presented to students at Edison High School in Northeast Minneapolis in April. The second was a portable drawing studio, designed with student input, called the Mobile Tracing Unit. The Tracing Unit's central feature was a large glass window through which community members view and then trace outlines of their neighborhood architecture. Through this simple exercise, participants would have an opportunity to view their community's streetscapes in a new way. The goal was to broaden their awareness and understanding of the built environment and how it can impact their lives. Through their tracings, community members would also become Capstone research partners by adding to the documentation of these historically significant corridors.

The third project element was the recruitment of a group of 14 students from various city neighborhoods to work and learn from Joe and Witt over the course of the summer. The intern's Capstone experience included an "Urban Planning 101" workshop, as well as tours of various neighborhoods where they learned the histories and made drawings and prints of the built environment. Following its completion, the interns joined Witt, Mischa, and Joe on a two-month Mobile Tracing Unit tour of various celebrations, festivals, and community sites.



In September, Joe, Witt, and the students concluded their collaboration with a presentation of the findings of the Historic Capstone Study, Mobile Tracing Unit activities, and artwork they had created at a meeting of the State Historic Preservation Commission. A month later in October, Witt attended the Creative Time Summit in New York City where he shared the Capstone and Creative CityMaking stories with colleagues from around the country. Witt's final gift to the City was a small art book outlining the ways that the City looks at Historic Preservation. The book would be distributed at a variety of locations in Minneapolis.

"Most people take least 5 minutes to create a drawing with the Mobile Tracing Unit. This gives us a lot of time to discuss ...historic properties, their relationship with the buildings, and the future of the particular area."

—CCM Artist

Above: A community member traces the outline of Dinkytown on the Mobile Tracing Unit.
Photo by: Rachel Eng

FOUR: Green Line Walking

Like many of America's urban centers, the Twin Cities once had an extensive system of streetcars that served the community. Fifty years after those services were eliminated, traffic congestion fueled by rapid community growth and the availability of Federal dollars spurred the development a new light rail system in the area. The initial Hiawatha, or Blue Line, provided light rail service to nineteen stations between downtown Minneapolis and the Mall of America in 2004. Ten years later, a new Green Line expanded service to connect downtown Minneapolis to the center of St. Paul. As that project was nearing completion, planning began for a seventeen station Green Line extension into Minneapolis' Southwest suburbs.

As part of this process, CPED initiated the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Transitional Station Area Action Plan to guide the development of the five new Green Line stations that would be located within Minneapolis. For this project, the Creative CityMaking team paired artist Diane Willow with city planners Beth Elliot and Paul Mogush. In their initial conversations, the team decided to explore ways to include underrepresented voices both inside and outside the normal public engagement process. This meant that they would work on developing new engagement tools for use "outside" in community settings, as well as "inside" CPED's regular community planning meetings. From past experience, the planners knew that the issue of light rail would attract good-sized audiences and strong opinions, regardless of where the conversation was being convened.

In February 2014, Diane began immersing herself in the world of transportation planning to get up to speed on the language and stakeholders involved in the process. She also accompanied Beth and Paul to an initial workshop on Minneapolis station areas for the Transitional Station Area Action Plan (TSAAP) process, and a meeting involving city staff, Minneapolis members of the SWLRT Citizen Advisory Committee, and Business Advisory Committee. Following these encounters, the team started to identify the critical questions they wanted to explore within the five "station communities." Key among them was the issue of access. Namely: how can a station's design increase the accessibility and safety of the transit experience?

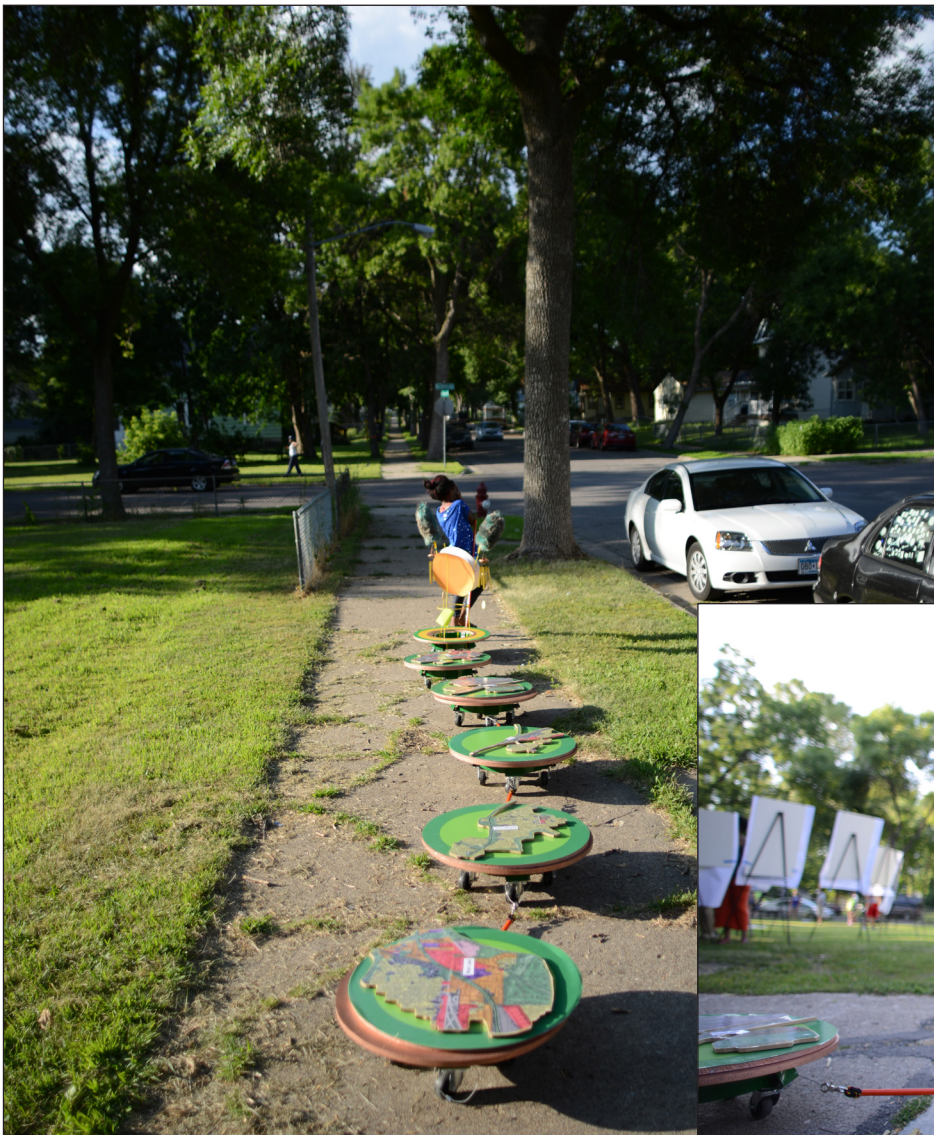
With this in mind, the team's thinking centered on the planning concept of "walkshed"—the walkable area around a particular point of interest. Generally, planners use a distance of one-quarter to one-half mile, or 10 minutes, as an estimate of how far, or how long, most people are willing to walk to a transit hub or another destination. This led the team to consider how to explore walkshed related questions with community members who were potential LRT riders. They were particularly interested in ways of recording first person perspectives of people traversing the walksheds around the station areas.

In April, the team traveled to each of the five stations for a firsthand look at the areas. Shortly thereafter, a SWLRT Open House presented Diane with her first opportunity for engaging a CPED community planning meeting. To better understand the walksheds surrounding the stations, and to make the walkshed concept more concrete and legible, she created maps representing the area from which pedestrians can access the stations within ten minutes. Using a computer-aided router, she cut wooden shapes of the five station areas' walkshed maps. These interesting shapes were covered with their corresponding street maps and displayed near the entrance to the Open House along with markers and colorful sticky notes.

The result was a set of very eccentric shapes that would be an accessible conversation catalyst for community feedback about station accessibility. Open House attendees were invited to draw or print their responses to a question that was posted next to the shapes. It read: *Which station would you use and why?*

Throughout May and June, this collection of tangible walkshed maps evolved to become a portable series of connected station area maps called the Roving Green Line. The new design, which mimicked the segmented form of an 18-foot long caterpillar, was used in community events to orient attendees to the concept of a walkshed and stimulate discussions about station design, accessibility, and mobility within the City and between the City and the suburbs.

During this time, Diane also started to consider ways to engage community members directly in the areas around the proposed station sites. During the planning meetings when questions of walkability and access arose, the discussion tended to focus on the general pedestrian experience. After a while, Diane began to feel that the feedback they were getting was too generic to be useful to the planners. Was the pedestrian a young parent with an infant and a toddler in hand, someone walking with a cane to sustain their balance, a person carrying multiple bags of groceries, a skateboarder on the way to the light rail station? With these kinds of questions in mind she began considering how to reveal individual walkshed encounters more personally—how to highlight the diverse ways that people might experience the terrain of the proposed walksheds.



“I think there is something we can learn from this process about making engagement more fun and the documents more readable and useable.”

- City Planner



Above: Diane Willow's Roving Green Line. The caterpillar-like sculpture made appearances at community picnics and events and often accompanied other planning efforts like mapping key destinations around each station area. Photos by: Eliza Lynard

Diane had learned from Paul and Beth how important it was for planners to document and understand the character of each of the walksheds. This piqued her interest in documenting the physical terrain around the stations. She began to conceptualize an interactive medium that would allow anyone to record the physical experience of taking a particular route to the station area. After experimenting with playful approaches to engage people in this mode of first person documentation, Diane came up with the Rolling Foot Cam. Using the Foot Cam, anyone could create a real-time foot-level video of any route or pathway they traversed within a walkshed. Here Diane describes it in the Creative CityMaking evaluation:

“The Rolling Foot Cam moves a camera that is attached to wheel-mounted, life-sized sculptural feet. Guiding it with a height-adjustable handle, participants record the ground view as they walk in the proposed walkshed areas and in nearby neighborhoods. The video portrays what it is like to “walk in someone else’s shoes.” The primary motivation for the rolling foot cam is as a catalyst for empathy; transforming the ubiquitous pedestrian, as discussed in planning meetings, into embodied individuals by portraying a visceral knowledge of each person’s movement along particular pathways. The video recordings also gather a visual record of the terrain traveled by pedestrians: smooth cement walks, fractured sidewalk surfaces, variable levels of cobblestone or brick, undulating asphalt heaves, unpaved surfaces.”

“I learned about the rhythm of planning projects, how to identify when in the process particular modes of engagement may be most meaningful.”

- CCM Artist

In the final two months of the summer, the team made good use of both the Roving Green Line and the Mobile Foot Cam as catalysts for public engagement and discussion about the impact of the Green Line expansion. Building on these successes, the team began planning for a series of large-scale culminating events involving large helium balloons functioning as enormous map dots, highly visible walkshed markers in the landscape, and the use of VoIP phone technology to facilitate on-site, real-time community input. The idea was that the balloon markers would make the often obscure locations of the proposed station areas more visible, and the VoIP technology would encourage a greater range of public feedback in the form of spoken words and oral comments.

Unfortunately, as the leaves began to turn in the Twin Cities, conflicts within the multi-jurisdictional SWLRT partnership stalled the final agreement on the extension’s final route. This not only threw a wrench into the planning process, but also halted preparation for both the culminating community events, and a planned showcase of the findings with the Minneapolis City Council.

Despite this abrupt end to the project, all three of the project’s partners came away with a renewed sense of accomplishment and possibility for both the SWLRT effort and the City’s planning process. This optimism was forcefully communicated in comments they shared in the months following the close of the program:

“I would be surprised if, as an outcome of the CCM collaboration, the planners and artists are not inspired to see and do things differently, to imagine a greater range of modalities for engaging a broader spectrum of people in these conversations.” *Diane Willow, Creative CityMaking Artist*

“It has changed me. There is a perception that planners aren’t creative about their engagement...these broad-brush assumptions dramatically diminished as we got to know each other. Having different perspectives in the engagement process is helpful. Having people involved who think differently helps me to think more creatively.” *Beth Elliot, Principal City Planner.*

“If we have tools in the office that we can grab, like a foot cam or something that is easy to print, we can use them on a day-to-day basis. Actually, we aren’t going to have much of a choice. We just raised the bar and increased people’s expectations. CCM has been very visible in the community. It has been in all parts of the city and has gotten a lot of attention. As a practical matter, it is going to change how engagement is done.”

Paul Mogush, Principal City Planner

FIVE: Ping Pong, Chalkboards, and Coasters

When Ashley Hansen and Wing Young Huie appeared before the Creative CityMaking artist selection panel in December 2012 they made a strong impression. This was not just because of their presentation, which was imaginative and forceful. It was largely because of the extraordinary breadth and variety of their experience using their art to engage communities in the kinds conversations that the program’s partners had envisioned for Creative CityMaking.

Wing and Ashley were partnered with city planner Jim Voll to work on the development of a Small Area Plan for a fifty-block area in North Minneapolis designated as the Penn Avenue Corridor. This undertaking was part of a larger community planning and revitalization effort being led by Hennepin County in collaboration with the City of Minneapolis and the Metropolitan Transit Council that was focused on stimulating economic development, job creation, housing strategies, beautification, and livability, in and between the commercial nodes along this spine in North Minneapolis.

As a team, Ashley, Wing, and Jim defined and quickly settled into complimentary roles. Wing and Ashley took the lead on designing and executing the engagement strategies. Jim focused on identifying the broad areas that are within the scope of a Small Area Plan (economic development, livability, and connectivity) and those areas that are not, steering them through CPED’s process for developing a plan.

The team’s initial work together focused on developing an overall framework and brainstorming about ways to connect with community members who would not normally engage with the City. They also decided to develop a website, createplace.org, as a home for their engagement tools and to house information collected during the project. An important part of this preliminary work included informational interviews with a wide variety of people including reporters, community organizers, other artists, academics, and politicians. These interactions led to further conversations with community groups about plugging their initial engagement approaches into existing community events and activities.

“When we were out with the chalkboards it felt constructive and a little bit like a fun game—it put people in a positive mood.”

- City Planner

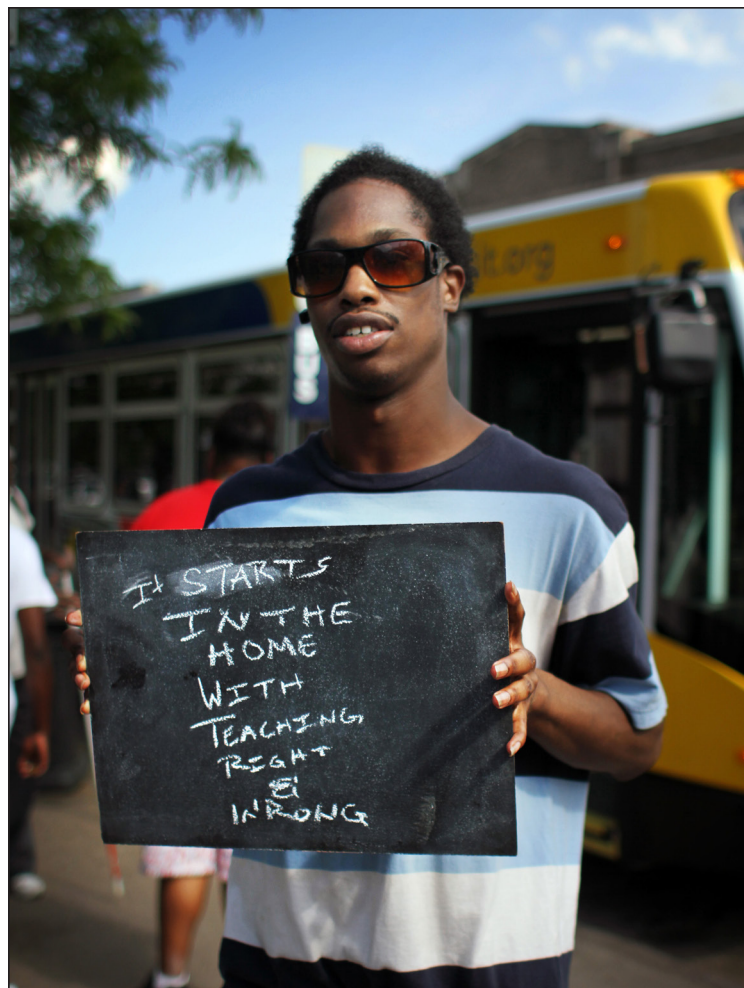
These first tools were basic question and answer strategies designed to be used on the street in good weather, at community events, or at businesses when conditions warranted. One of these tools, *The Traveling Chalkboard* was just that, a small handheld chalkboard that people used to write an answer to questions like: Where are you going? What do you like about your neighborhood? What would you change? When they encountered *The Pen(n) Project*, people were invited to either pose, or answer a question in a large book using a selection of colorful pens. When they were done, they passed it on. The goal was to keep it going, like a community chain letter.

To spread the wealth, so to speak, Wing and Ashley also decided to train community members themselves to use these tools. Given the accessible nature of these activities, it is not surprising that the team found themselves

accumulating a healthy amount of data. This led to the development of a database that allowed the team to systematically capture and share the gathered input.

In early spring, the Penn Avenue team decided to work on some new strategies to prompt more sustained engagement. One of these, presented in conjunction with neighborhood partners the Redeemer Church and The Breakfast Club, was a fairly straight forward *Community Think Tank* where attendees discussed the challenges and opportunities related to critical issues the community faced. The other less traditional offering was the *Bus Stop Theater* performance described earlier in this article. Created in partnership with the staff and young actors from the local Capri Theater, this imaginative street performance made it possible to engage local bus riders directly in a discussion about issues related to public transit.

In late May, after a group of students from the University of Minnesota joined them, and the team decided to expand their community engagement repertoire even further. Some of the new tools that emerged included table tents and drink coasters designed to elicit planning related tweets and text messages from bar patrons, a ping-pong competition that simulated planning discourse, and a Bus Stop Jeopardy game that took the Bus Stop Theater to a whole new level.



As fun as they sound, when implemented, these strategies also proved effective in both attracting new voices, and providing input that is useful to the planning process. As the summer heated up, so did Wing and Ashley's testing of new concepts for connecting with the community. A number of pop-up galleries (very short exhibitions in empty storefronts) displaying photos and voices of the community opened and closed in rapid succession in multiple locations in North Minneapolis. These events incorporated ping-pong, chalkboards, and performances as a means of community engagement.

Given the significant volume of information collected through the website, event documentation, and community engagement, the team decided to devote the final fall months of the project to data compilation. As part of this wrap-up they asked artist Stephanie Rogers to help them design a Community Engagement Strategies ArtBook (newspaper) to summarize what they learned and celebrate their successful engagement strategies. To bring the project full circle, the Penn Avenue team partnered with Capri Theater in November to present a final Bus Stop Theater performance and community discussion. Three weeks later, the freshly printed ArtBook made its debut at Intermedia Arts' Gallery as part of the 'This is Our City' exhibition. Copies were also distributed to the Breakfast Club, Redeemer Church, Harrison Neighborhood Association, Cleveland Neighborhood Association, West Broadway Business Association, Capri Theater, and Plymouth Christian Youth Center.

Above: A community member shares his thoughts on the *Traveling Chalkboard*.
Photo by: Eliza Lynard

Lessons

Soon after receiving notice of the ArtPlace grant award, Intermedia Arts had engaged evaluators Kristin Johnstad and Patricia Seppanen, of Johnstad and Associates, to conduct an assessment of the one year project. Their evaluation plan focused on three key areas: first, gathering information that could be used to improve the program's design and implementation. Next, documenting the collaborative efforts of the organizational partners and artist-planner teams. And finally, providing data for stakeholders to use in judging the overall effectiveness of Creative CityMaking in achieving its goals. The following lessons rely heavily on the feedback and reporting provided by the evaluation team.

Creative CityMaking provided planners with a wealth of new, field-tested tools and strategies for engaging traditionally under-represented communities.

Public input is clearly an important part of the planning process. It stands to reason that municipal policies and decisions that affect peoples lives are best developed in partnership with the communities that are impacted. A typical planning process uses community meetings scheduled in advance and open to interested community members as a key strategy for community outreach. Other engagement strategies include focus groups, one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders, and online information sharing. Most planners agree that there are many people who live and work in the communities they serve who, for a variety reasons, are unlikely to participate in these types of exchanges.

Minneapolis planners saw Creative City Making as a way to explore new approaches for broadening and diversifying community input into their planning efforts.

The Creative CityMaking teams agreed early on that engaging the community more directly could be a good way to broaden the planning conversation. In practical terms this meant going out into the community and engaging citizens where they live, work and congregate. By using this approach, places like shopping centers, schools, community events, parks, bus stops, restaurants, and busy intersections became settings for impromptu planning discussions. In some instances (e.g. Dinkytown or North Minneapolis) these sites also represented the physical environment, fueling conversations about issues like transportation options and the impact of new development.

Given the serendipitous nature of this new strategy, another important design consideration was that these “engagement tools” needed to be easily understood, inviting, and yes, even entertaining and fun. Over the course of the twelve-month Creative CityMaking initiative, the artist-planner teams responded with an extraordinary range of creative engagement processes. All told, they created twenty-two different arts-based tools and strategies designed to stimulate learning and dialogue about possible community futures and assets. How these tools will be used by the City's planners in their ongoing work is a longer-term question.

Arts-based approaches can increase the diversity and depth of community engagement around planning issues.

From its earliest inception, broadening participation in the City's planning process was a central aim of the Creative CityMaking initiative. After twelve months of collaboration, there is no doubt that the work of the artist-planner teams demonstrably increased the participation of under-represented communities in the City's planning discourse.

All told, an estimated 1,800⁷ people participated in fifty-eight different arts-based community events presented as a part of Creative CityMaking. The resulting citizen input, shared in the form chalkboard questions, street-side conversations, zine questionnaires, community journals, drawings, classroom dialogues, community discussion groups, impromptu interviews, happy hour conversations, video diaries, and more, appreciably expanded the range and variety of community voices available to city planners. Data collected in two sites indicated over 90% of these respondents had never participated in a city planning process. Beyond the give-and-take with individual citizens, it is also worth noting that the City's expanded planning dialogue further extended through the dozens of community-based organizations that became co-sponsors of the various activities.

Another notable outcome was the significant number of young people who were involved as both presenters and participants at many of the Creative CityMaking events. This is not surprising given that all five projects identified young people and/or young adults as a principal focus. As a result, many of the City's planners have a new appreciation for the valuable contributions that young people can make in community planning.

“My view of art has expanded...I can see its power now as an impetus for change.”

- City Planner

The Creative CityMaking collaboration was a significant learning experience for both artists and planners.

One of program's principal goals was to support a team of local artists and planners actively engaged in critical thinking and art-making around city and urban issues. The intent was to strengthen the ability of artists and planners to work together to increase the quality and inclusiveness of social discourse about the City's urban future. Throughout the project year, artists and planners reflected both individually and collectively on how they were being affected by their participation in the project. Their feedback highlighted three key areas:

- 1) **How the experience reinforced their understanding of what it takes to do effective work.** For planners, these included the importance of forging sustained and trusting partnerships in support community engagement and planning, and a reminder that planning is, in part, an intensely creative process. Many of the artists involved felt that the experience strengthened their understanding of both the “power of the arts to change people's lives,” and the unique set of skills needed to make that happen.
- 2) **How Creative CityMaking participation enhanced their knowledge and learning in support of their ongoing work.** Artists described how their Creative CityMaking experience had opened their eyes to the value and complexity of municipal planning. Artist team members also expressed a renewed appreciation of how readily an arts engendered atmosphere of playfulness can stimulate deeply genuine community conversations. Planners also recognized both their affinity with, and the power of, these creative approaches. They also came away with a new appreciation for the capabilities of experienced community engaged artists. Both planners and artists expressed a heightened appreciation for both the complexity and critical importance of authentic community engagement in their work.
- 3) **How the Creative CityMaking partnership gave artists and planners a chance to stretch their practice.** During their twelve-month partnership, Creative CityMaking team members learned and experienced new ways of working from their counterparts—new approaches that were often informed by profoundly differing definitions of success. For

⁷ A full accounting of participation did not take place at all Creative CityMaking events. As such, it is likely that actual participation was significantly higher.

artists accustomed to working independently, joining a municipal enterprise dense with political constraints and bureaucratic checks and balances was certainly a challenging departure. But many found learning how and why these systems function as a boon to their continuing work as cultural change agents. Through their collaboration with their artist partners, the planners not only expanded their civic engagement pallet, but also learned new strategies for examining the core assumptions that inform their work. Artists and planners alike found that the collaborative process itself was an adaptive challenge that ultimately helped to focus and amplify their individual learning and expand their learning community.

Creative CityMaking's collaborative support structures and activities advanced the quality and depth of the initiative's partnerships.

The Creative CityMaking designers⁸ understood that for the project to succeed they would need to create a reliable framework to facilitate communication and problem solving among the various partners. The foundation of this support system was a series of convenings for learning and exchange among principal players. This "Creative CityMaking Institute" was facilitated by Erik Takeshita and Wendy Morris, two veteran faculty members from Intermedia's decade old Creative Community Leadership Institute (CCLI).

Over the project's twelve months, city and Intermedia staff, and the artist-planner teams met together four times in a series of one and two-day gatherings. These forums functioned as a collaborative laboratory that not only addressed nuts and bolts issues, but also allowed for sharing of expertise and ideas among, and between individuals and planning projects. These included discussions about the power of language and differing definitions of success, comparisons of planning and art processes, assumptions and stereotypes about artists, planners, government and communities, and the complex social issues that are intrinsic to community planning processes.

"The convenings...served as a setting to wipe away the differences, see similarities that can bring us together, and then move forward together.

- City Planner

Based on the evaluation feedback, it is clear that the majority of participants regarded these convenings as a helpful and constructive aspect of the initiative, particularly when critical differences emerged on teams, or within the larger group. Other critical structures and activities developed in support of the Creative CityMaking initiative included:

- Creation and continued adaptation of a multi-level leadership and advisory infrastructure that included a Partner Group, a Staff Team, and an Evaluation Team
- The development of a process and protocols for the selection of artists and planning projects
- Regular meetings of the four artist-planner teams.
- Monthly peer-learning meetings of artists with project staff
- A culminating exhibition of Creative CityMaking work at Intermedia Arts
- Four Creative CityMaking events hosted by artist-planner teams designed to "share back" with the planning project's community

⁸ A team comprised of and senior planning staff was organized to provide guidance and support for the . A number of key groups were formed that met regularly throughout the year: a partnership group, staff team, and evaluation team.

Creative CityMaking planners and artists discovered that they have much in common.

It is interesting to note that the first discernible historic reference to a community's planning efforts appears in Gilgamesh, an epic poem from 1200 BC Mesopotamia that is considered the world's first truly great work of literature. Because humans are, by nature, both creators and cooperators, the manifestations of these impulses, making and planning, naturally function in service to the other. Through their work together, Creative CityMaking's team of 21st century planners and artists experienced this synergy in a number of ways.

The team members recognized that they were all creators who had been trained to identify underlying patterns, forms, and structures in their surroundings and then apply their creative skills and strategies to help others make sense and meaning of it all. They also saw that both planners and community artists regularly assume multiple (often simultaneous) roles as researchers, synthesizers, translators, and ultimately makers. In doing this, both are highly dependent on the quality and depth of their constituent relationships for the success of their work. Creative CityMaking's planners and community artists also understood that integrity of these interactions were critical to their ability to create plans, or make artwork that is understood and embraced by their community partners.

Participating artists benefited directly from their involvement in the Creative CityMaking initiative.

A number of the artists involved in the project saw their experience as having increased their capacity to do effective community-based work. Some of the Creative CityMaking artists have become increasingly sought-after practitioners in the community arts field. Some have even gone on to become consultants to others interested in creative placemaking. One example is the City of Bloomington's *Creative Placemaking in the South Loop* project, which is being informed by several of the artists affiliated with Creative CityMaking. Another outgrowth is the *Create Place* initiative, (see: <http://createplace.org/>) a new arts-based community engagement platform that grew out of the work done by artists and city planners.

Creative CityMaking has advanced Intermedia Arts' capacity to foster creative partnerships with the public sector, and ACCE's capacity to foster creative partnerships within Minneapolis City government.

Creative CityMaking was Intermedia's first sustained engagement with local government and the public sector, and ACCE's first collaboration with a community-based non-profit organization. Through it, both organizations were able to demonstrate that new and effective ways of working can come from integrating arts-based strategies, processes and thinking into the ongoing activities of City government. Based in part on Creative CityMaking's initial success, Intermedia received a \$1 million grant from the Kresge Foundation to continue its partnership with the City of Minneapolis. In addition to expanding the program to other city departments Creative CityMaking's next iteration will also be supported by two new full-time Creative Leadership Programs staff members.

Intermedia's work has also attracted the attention of other organizations and municipalities who see the Creative CityMaking model as a promising way to integrate the arts into community life. After sharing the story of Creative CityMaking at a recent conference, Intermedia received invitations to support placemaking efforts in New Zealand and Canada. Intermedia Arts has been in this work for over forty years, but this level of visibility is very new for the organization. The ArtPlace grant has positioned the organization to have a stronger platform to contribute to growing the field locally, nationally, and globally. In their 2013 strategic plan, the leadership of Intermedia Arts framed its vision as being "a nationally recognized leader whose investment in changemaking artists, community partnerships,

and unique arts-based approaches leads to more capable, healthy and equitable communities.” The ArtPlace grant has been a critical factor in helping them make progress towards that vision.

The new ACCE program has received support from the Mayor and other elected officials who see the program as a way for the City to build new relationships within communities that the City has historically struggled to reach. This support has been in the form of new program funding targeted at developing city capacity to continue the program beyond the grant-funded period. The Artplace grant allowed the program to prototype a new concept with grant dollars instead of tax payer funds thereby allowing the City to effectively innovate public processes—experimenting, while also minimizing risk to the City.

The documentation of Creative CityMaking has produced a valuable source of learning and lessons for continuing efforts.

The project participants and evaluators collaborated throughout the Creative CityMaking initiative to document *and* share the wide variety of information that was gathered. The documentary strategies used during the project included: individual and group interviews, participant surveys and questionnaires, collection and review of ongoing project material, evaluation review sessions, project site visits, and the joint creation of a set of Creative CityMaking success indicators.

The elaboration of lessons and principles to inform both ongoing and future work occurred at many points during the project year in a number of ways. This diverse archive filled with field reports, journal entries, survey data, videos, blog entries, publications, news articles, artwork, blueprints, photos, and a variety of progress and summative reports constitutes a rich learning resource, not only for Creative CityMaking’s continued efforts, but for future researchers as well.



At the end of the first year of Creative CityMaking, the community gathered to celebrate the work and to learn more about the tools and processes that the artist and planner teams developed. Jack Byers of the Planning Division and Theresa Sweetland of Intermedia Arts kicked off the celebration to welcome the community and reflect on the arts-based innovation that resulted from their strong cross-sector collaboration.

Photo by: Katie Fears

CODA

From its early inception the Creative CityMaking partners understood that the territory they were exploring was new and largely untested. While most of the Creative CityMaking team had extensive partnership experience, none had engaged in the kind of purposeful matchmaking and collaboration this project called for.

Experiments, by definition, typically start with more questions than answers, so no one truly knew *how* or even *if* the enterprise would make it to the finish line, let alone fulfill its stated goals. Could a city department and a local arts organization effectively join forces in service to an essential government function? Could an already busy planning team accommodate the added demands of such a new and potentially unpredictable venture? Could the divergent experiences and perspectives inherent to the Creative CityMaking collaboration be leveraged to advance the City's goals? The bottom line is that the initiative did make it to the finish line, not only with its partnerships intact, but having made significant headway addressing these (and other) threshold questions. This is no small feat.

In their evaluative feedback, key players openly indicated that particular elements considered critical to advancing Creative CityMaking's goals could, in retrospect, be improved. Particular issues included the timeliness and completeness of communication, coordination of decisions affecting the work and data collection, and time constraints that limited partner participation. But challenges like these are to be expected in any initiative involving multiple organizations and departments, players with very different professional backgrounds and ways of working, and the need to design, launch, and complete untried activities within a relatively short time period. In retrospect, any one, or a combination of these complicating factors, could have stalled or derailed the initiative.

“Creative CityMaking... provided the foundation of deep learning and relationship building that will be needed to support the program's continued development.”

Many experiments are considered a success when they prove a negative or eliminate a potentially errant path. Stepping back, it is clear that Creative CityMaking has done much more. It has road tested an ambitious idea, highlighting both potential benefits and pitfalls. It has provided the foundation of deep learning and relationship building that will be needed to support the program's continued development. Most importantly, it has propelled Creative CityMaking across the symbolic “what if?” threshold into the tangible terrain of “now what?”—opening the door for a whole host of future chapters.

In the early part of 2015, those next chapters began to show themselves in a big way. With an investment of over \$1 million from private, federal and municipal resources, Intermedia and the city of Minneapolis launched an expanded initiative focused on what the City is calling, “One Minneapolis.” In collaboration with Minneapolis' ACCE program, this new effort is “designed to foster a more equitable Minneapolis by bringing the resources of highly skilled community artists to complex City-community challenges.” Through it, nine experienced community artists have been embedded in the departments of the City Clerk, the Long Range Planning Division, Regulatory Services, Neighborhood and Community Relations, and Information Technology. These teams of artists and city staffers will spend a year working together to develop and implement new, arts-based approaches to advancing the City's equity goals. They will also be adding new stories of how creative collaboration, problem-solving and trust-making can help build a more capable, healthy and equitable city.



The community celebration was also a launch of a four month long exhibit at Intermedia Arts featuring the story of each planning process that gave the community a chance to interact with the engagement tools and to learn more about how community voice was integrated into city processes through the arts.

Photo by: Katie Fears

For more information on the Minneapolis Creative CityMaking Initiative, including press, a list of participating artists, and more:

<http://www.intermediaarts.org/creative-citymaking>

About the Author

William Cleveland is a pioneer in the arts and community development movement and one of its most poetic documenters. His books *Art in Other Places*, *Making Exact Change*, and *Art and Upheaval* are considered seminal works in the field of cultural community development. Organizer, teacher, researcher, and musician, he also directs the [Center for the Study of Art and Community](#). The Center works to integrate the arts and community life, focusing on, the development of cultural partnerships, and training for artists, and their community, and business partners. Bill has also led the Walker Art Center's Education Department, California's Arts-In-Corrections Program, and the California State Summer School for the Arts. His most recent book *Between Grace and Fear: The Role of the Arts in a Time of Change* written with Patricia Shifferd was published in 2011. His CD, *SongLines*, based in part on stories from *Art and Upheaval*, was released in 2012.

About Intermedia Arts

As Minnesota's premier multidisciplinary, multicultural arts organization, **Intermedia Arts** builds understanding among people by catalyzing and inspiring artists to make changes in their lives and communities. Intermedia Arts provides creative people of all ages with the opportunities, tools, and support to come together across disciplines, sectors, and boundaries to connect, create, share, collaborate, innovate, think big, and act as catalysts for positive community-driven and community-defined change. They are a nationally recognized leader in empowering artists and community leaders to use arts-based approaches to solve community issues. By stimulating deeper community engagement and providing a platform for the stories and experiences of underrepresented communities locally, nationally, and internationally, Intermedia Arts contributes to a stronger, healthier society.

Visit IntermediaArts.org for more information.

About Animating Democracy

Launched in 1999, **Animating Democracy** is a core program of Americans for the Arts that works to inspire, inform, promote, and connect arts as a contributor to community, civic, and social change. Over the last decade, Animating Democracy has supported, through regranteeing, a wide range of arts organizations doing compelling civic engagement work, implemented national research, and developed field resources and publications. Animating Democracy is frequently called upon to serve as program adviser, researcher, and funding/research partner. In all of our work, Animating Democracy brings to bear Americans for the Arts' unique strengths in research, policy, professional development, visibility, and advocacy.

Visit AnimatingDemocracy.org for more information.

Americans for the Arts serves, advances, and leads the network of organizations and individuals who cultivate, promote, sustain, and support the arts in America. Founded in 1960, Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education.



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