



A PLAN FOR
**CREATIVE
PLACEMAKING**

IN THE
**SOUTH
LOOP**



A *PLAN* FOR CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN THE SOUTH LOOP

PREPARED BY ARTISTRY, CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
AND CONSULTANT TEAM CREATIVE COMMUNITY BUILDERS.
ADOPTED BY THE ARTISTRY BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON JULY 21, 2015.
ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON CITY COUNCIL ON JULY 27, 2015.



CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN THE SOUTH LOOP IS AN INITIATIVE OF ARTISTRY AND THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON. THE LAUNCH OF *CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN THE SOUTH LOOP* WAS FUNDED BY AN "OUR TOWN" GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (NEA), WITH MATCHING SUPPORT FROM THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, ARTISTRY (F/K/A BLOOMINGTON THEATRE AND ART CENTER), AND OTHER PARTNERS. THE 18-MONTH GRANT PERIOD EXTENDED FROM JANUARY 2014 THROUGH AUGUST 2015.

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LEAD ORGANIZATIONS AND FUNDING

The launch of creative placemaking in the South Loop was funded by an “Our Town” Grant from the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**, with matching support from the **City of Bloomington, Artistry (f/k/a Bloomington Theatre and Art Center)**, and other partners. The 18-month grant period extended from January 2014 through August 2015.

LEAD PARTNERS

Mall of America, McGough, and Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau contributed funds to help Artistry and the City secure the NEA grant and served as lead project partners.

CORE TEAM

A core team met twice monthly to manage the NEA grant-funded period of creative placemaking in the South Loop. Members included:

Rachel Daly	<i>Director of Visual Arts, Artistry</i>
Julie Farnham	<i>Senior Planner, City of Bloomington</i>
Larry Lee*	<i>Director of Community Development, City of Bloomington</i>
Andrea Specht*	<i>Executive Director, Artistry</i>
Jim Urie*	<i>Manager, Bloomington Center for the Arts</i>
Tom Borrup	<i>Principal, Creative Community Builders (CCB)</i>
Peter Musty	<i>Project Manager, Charrette Director (CCB)</i>
Carrie Ann Christensen	<i>Demonstration Project Manager (CCB)</i>

* Also served as Creative Placemaking Advisory Committee member

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following advisory committee members met quarterly during 2014-2015:

Jack Becker	<i>Executive Director & Founder, Forecast Public Art</i>
Cynthia Bemis Abrams	<i>Councilmember, City of Bloomington</i>
Bonnie Carlson	<i>President & CEO, Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau (BCVB)</i>
Mark Fabel	<i>Lead Project Manager, McGough</i>
Dan Jasper	<i>Vice President Public Relations, Mall of America</i>
Jason Moore	<i>Board President, Artistry</i>
Randy Walker	<i>Public Artist</i>

PROJECT HOSTS (HOST NETWORK)

A network of South Loop property owners and stakeholders agreed to be Project Hosts for Demonstration Projects during the NEA grant-funded phase of creative placemaking in the South Loop. Prospective Project Hosts coordinated with the artists, designers, and other creative people who developed and submitted project concepts for jury consideration.

The initial host network included:

City of Bloomington	Metro Office Park
Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau	Metro Transit
Cypress Semiconductor*	Metropolitan Airports Commission
HealthPartners	Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*
IKEA*	Radisson Blu*
JW Marriott	Three Rivers Park District
Mall of America*	
McGough	

* Hosted 2015 Commissioned Demonstration Projects

PLACEMAKERS

Artists, designers, and other creative people are referred to as “placemakers” throughout this plan. From among 54 applicants an interdisciplinary jury chose the following 15 placemakers and collaborating groups to submit proposals for Commissioned Demonstration Projects.

Lisa Berman (In New Company)	<i>Dance</i>
James Brenner	<i>Sculpture</i>
Kyle Fokken	<i>Sculpture</i>
Ashley Hanson & Andrew Gaylord (PlaceBase Productions)*	<i>Theater/Social Practice**</i>
Tom Henry*	<i>Field Artist/Landscape</i>
Robert Karimi	<i>Food/Theater/Social Practice**</i>
Amanda Lovelee	<i>Visual/Social Practice**</i>
Shanai Matteson	<i>Video/Social Practice**</i>
Erik Pearson*	<i>Mural</i>
Marjorie Pitz	<i>Sculpture</i>
Greg Preslicka	<i>Mural</i>
Molly Reichert & Andrea Johnson*	<i>Architecture/Sculpture/Social Practice**</i>
Belinda Tato	<i>Social Practice**/Events</i>
Peter Haakon Thompson	<i>Social Practice**/Photo</i>
Karl Unnasch	<i>Sculpture</i>

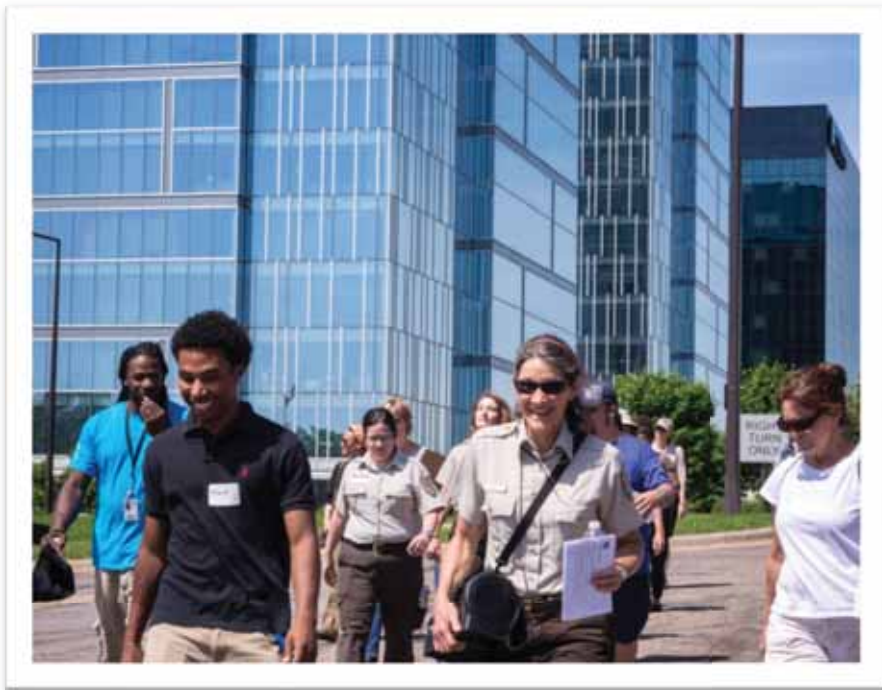
* Artists selected for 2015 Commissioned Demonstration Projects

** Social practice artists “...freely blur the lines among object making, performance, political activism [and] community organizing, . . . creating a deeply participatory art that often flourishes outside the gallery and museum system.” - Randy Kennedy, “Outside the Citadel, Social Practice Art is Intended to Nurture,” *The New York Times*, March 20, 2013.

PROJECT SELECTION JURY

To select the placemakers who would submit proposals for 2015 Demonstration Projects, the City and Artistry convened a placemaker and project selection committee comprising several Advisory Committee members, City staff, South Loop stakeholders, Artistry staff, project consultant team, and other regional arts administrators, artists and designers. The following served on the jury that reviewed Idea Prize submissions and Demonstration Project submittals:

Mary Altman	<i>Public Arts Administrator, City of Minneapolis</i>
Jack Becker	<i>Exec. Director & Principal, Forecast Public Art</i>
Cynthia Bemis-Abrams	<i>Member, Bloomington City Council</i>
Rachel Daly	<i>Director of Visual Arts, Artistry</i>
Maria Regan Gonzalez	<i>Health Specialist, Bloomington Public Health</i>
Mike Lamb	<i>Urban Designer and Planner, Barr Engineering</i>
Larry Lee	<i>Community Development Director, City of Bloomington</i>
Mark Morrison	<i>Recreation Supervisor, Bloomington Parks & Rec</i>
Peter Musty	<i>Urban Designer, CCB Consultant Team (Juror for Demo. Projects Only)</i>
Andrea Specht	<i>Executive Director, Artistry</i>
André Thibault	<i>Board Chair, Bloomington Chamber of Commerce (Juror for Idea Prize Only)</i>
Jim Urie	<i>Center for the Arts Manager, Bloomington Parks & Rec. (Juror for Demo. Projects Only)</i>
Randy Walker	<i>Public Artist</i>
Carrie Christensen	<i>Jury Coordinator, CCB Consultant Team</i>



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NEA GRANT AND KEY OUTCOMES

In 2013, Artistry and the City of Bloomington collaborated to obtain a \$100,000 NEA “Our Town” grant to (1) commission four to six Creative Placemaking Demonstration Projects and (2) develop a long-term plan to sustain creative placemaking in the South Loop.

LONG RANGE VISION AND GOALS FOR CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN SOUTH LOOP

The vision for creative placemaking in the South Loop is:

“Sustained creative placemaking efforts will establish the South Loop as a distinctive destination known for welcoming creative people and using the arts to transform the neighborhood physically, socially, and culturally.”

Goals for creative placemaking in the South Loop include:

1. **Urbanism:** Ensure urban design excellence in transforming the built environment.
2. **Animation:** Animate public spaces and strengthen the social and cultural fabric.
3. **Involvement:** Involve and empower people who inhabit and care about the South Loop.
4. **Identity:** Elevate and project South Loop's identity.
5. **Leadership:** Build capacity to sustain leadership and champions.
6. **Investment:** Establish a resident creative sector.

MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE MOMENTUM PHASE

The Momentum Phase will be a two to four-year period when the City and Artistry build on the momentum of the NEA grant-funded phase in terms of stakeholder engagement and establish ongoing governance and management mechanisms to sustain placemaking in the South Loop for many years to come. A Creative Placemaking Advisory Commission and a Creative Placemaking Director position will be created within the City, and the South Loop Development Fund will support an annual budget of approximately \$400,000. Artistry will provide artistic services under an agreement with the City.

MOVING BEYOND MOMENTUM

The City and Artistry aspire to expand creative placemaking to all of Bloomington and to broaden the base of funding to include non-public sources. The “Permanent Phase” will incorporate these ideas and reflect lessons learned during the Momentum Phase.

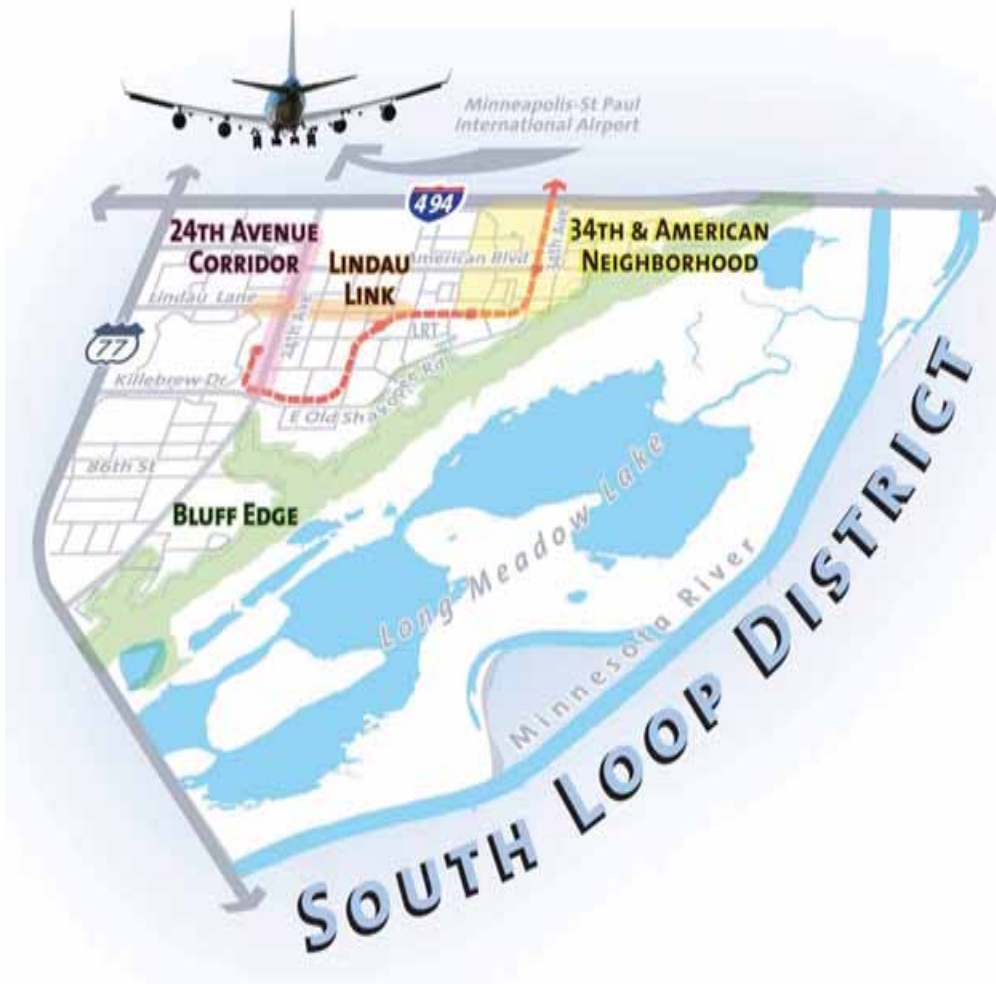
A black and white photograph of a large crowd at a stadium at night. The crowd is dense and fills the foreground and middle ground, looking towards the field. In the background, there are large stadium lights and structures. The sky is dark with some clouds. The overall atmosphere is that of a major sporting event.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

WHO, WHAT AND WHERE IS THE SOUTH LOOP?

The South Loop District sits at the confluence of two major rivers and has been a crossroads of cultures, commerce, and transportation for millennia. Over the last 150 years, the area's identity has been shaped by many diverse uses: from military fort reserve and missionary settlement to farming, major league sports, and world-renowned retail and commerce. More recently, a new vision has emerged for the district as a transit-supportive, mixed use neighborhood with walkable streets, attractive public amenities, and a sense of sophisticated urbanism. Public and private sector leaders have collaborated to implement the infrastructure required to support significant new investment.

Bordered in part by the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP) and the Minnesota River, the South Loop contains a unique mix of features and amenities: the Mall of America, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Visitors Center, the headquarters of corporations such as HealthPartners and Ceridian, numerous hotels, four light rail transit stations, a 1950s-era residential neighborhood, and hundreds of developable acres. The adjacent airport serves as a gateway; connecting Bloomington and the Twin Cities metropolitan region to the world.

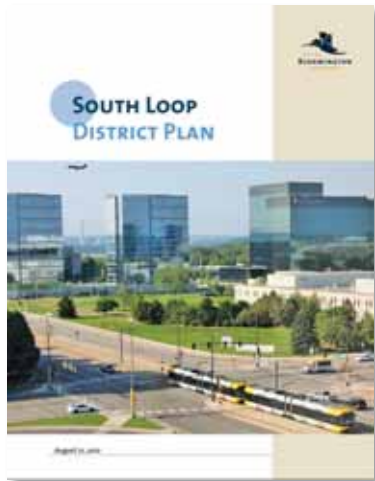


WHAT IS THE DISTRICT VISION ?

In 2012, the City adopted the South Loop District Plan to guide redevelopment of the district over the next few decades. The plan's vision is "...to transform South Loop from a dispersed, suburban commercial area into a walkable urban neighborhood that attracts residents, office tenants, hotel guests and shoppers by virtue of its unique character and assets."

To achieve the district vision, the City will pursue five primary goals:

1. Build on the **unique mix of assets** and mitigate its disadvantages;
2. Transform the **densities and character** from suburban to urban;
3. Accelerate the **development**;
4. Establish a **branded place** emphasizing sustainability, quality, comfort, and safety; and
5. Create a **sustainable** district.



The **district plan** recommends that creative people and artists play a driving and central role in transforming the South Loop, and contains a policy calling for the formal and organized exploration of creative placemaking activities.

WHAT IS CREATIVE PLACEMAKING ?

Creative placemaking is an emerging, interdisciplinary field that leverages the arts, design, and other creative disciplines to build vibrant, distinctive, and sustainable communities and economies.

Creative placemaking is intentional. It involves intentional actions to engage artists, designers, and other creative people in building social fabric and local economies while making physical place-based improvements.

Creative placemaking is broad-based. It is typically implemented through cross-sector processes and encompasses a broad range of permanent and temporary activities including music, public art, historical tours, streetscape design, cultural and public events, pop-up art, outdoor theater and performances, storefront art, wayfinding, and other creative acts that engage and connect the community to a place.

Creative placemaking builds pride of place and community. It values and builds on local assets and distinctive local character to enhance the social and civic fabric of place-based communities.

This document is both a report on creative placemaking activities conducted during the NEA grant-funded period and a plan for the "Momentum Phase," which will establish the foundation to sustain creative placemaking well into the future in the South Loop and ultimately, Bloomington as a whole.

II. BEGINNINGS

THIS PHOTO TAKEN AT THE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN THE SOUTH LOOP'S LAUNCH PARTY, ON DAY ONE OF THE SOUTH LOOP DISCOVERY CHARRETTE JUNE 12-20, 2014. A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF DISCOVERY CHARRETTE PARTICIPANTS AND ACTIVITIES IS INCLUDED IN APPENDIX A.



CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN THE SOUTH LOOP BEGINNINGS

NEA GRANT OUTCOMES

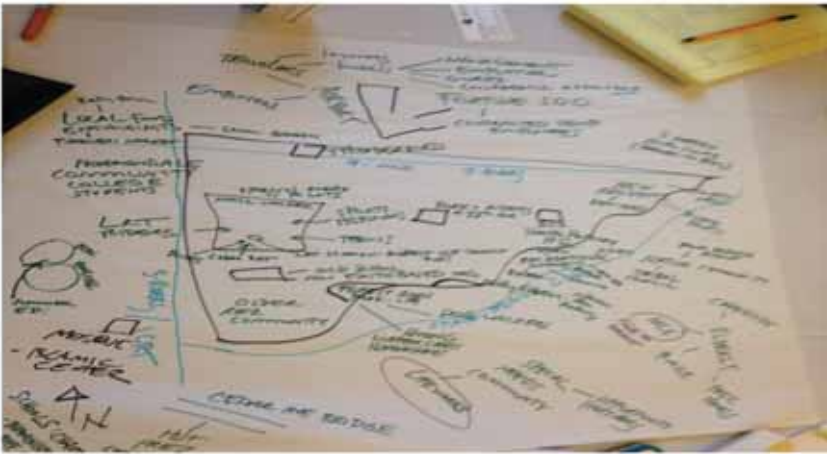
In 2013, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) awarded Artistry and the City of Bloomington a \$100,000 “Our Town” grant. Artistry, the City, and numerous partners matched the \$100,000 award and used it to develop this creative placemaking plan and commission a series of Creative Placemaking Demonstration Projects during an 18-month grant funded period.

The grant application outlined several long-term outcomes that NEA funding would help to achieve:

- A **more livable, vibrant, and beautiful community** for the South Loop’s residents, workers, and visitors.
- A **new City development paradigm** that integrates art and arts experiences into the design of public spaces and infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, utilities, parks) and private improvements (buildings, signs, parking areas).
- Artistry’s **expanded capacity** to engage larger and more diverse audiences and to incorporate new disciplines (e.g., public art) into its programming.
- A **successful, replicable model** for using creative placemaking in a suburban context.

Key objectives of the grant were to:

1. Identify a **governance and management structure**, and sources of funding to ensure creative placemaking efforts are sustained into the future; and
2. Conduct four to six “demonstration “ projects to:



- **build social fabric;**
- **inspire stakeholder investment;**
- **test public policies and best practices** to integrate creative placemaking into public projects and private development; and
- begin establishing criteria and processes **to ensure artistic integrity and excellence** in all commissioned artists and works.

PLANNING METHODOLOGY: LEARNING BY DOING

Artistry and City of Bloomington staff selected the consultant team Creative Community Builders (CCB) to help manage the NEA grant-funded phase of creative placemaking in the South Loop. Together, staff and CCB consultants formed a Core Team that used an immersive, learning-intensive process to achieve the NEA grant objectives.

With guidance from the Core Team, Creative Placemaking Advisory Committee, and placemaker/project selection committee, a diverse set of artists, designers, and other creative people were mobilized to engage South Loop stakeholders and the regional arts community in a wide range of activities. From these activities, the Core Team harvested innumerable lessons about the capacities, attitudes, realities – and the immense possibilities – for creative placemaking in the South Loop. Key activities during the NEA grant-funded phase are summarized on the following pages.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

An early Core Team task was to identify the South Loop’s major stakeholders, including key groups and sub-communities within the South Loop that deserved active roles in creative placemaking. The stakeholder-identification process included historical research and numerous conversations and meetings. A range of communications and outreach activities were then conducted to help stakeholders discover, share perspectives about, and celebrate the South Loop community. For

example, promotional materials were designed and published in the community; City and Artistry staff provided updates in the quarterly *City Briefing* and in video productions on the City’s YouTube channel; email lists were created for participants; and a public relations company was contracted to promote the Discovery Charrette (described below).

CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The following activities set a baseline for—and began to build Artistry’s and the City’s capacity for—implementing creative placemaking.

- Test current City regulations and permitting processes as applied to creative placemaking and public art projects.
- Collaborate on projects that required active involvement of Artistry staff, City staff, placemakers, and other South Loop stakeholders.
- Work with new artistic disciplines and artists outside Artistry’s traditional realm.
- Develop and test a variety of placemaker and project selection methods.
- Implement creative placemaking projects as demonstrations of impact and to develop relationships and capacities among Project Hosts, Artistry, City, and others through the process.

Activities during the beginning phase of creative placemaking in the South Loop included:

2014: South Loop Discovery Charrette (*Demonstration Project #1*)

2015: Commissioned Demonstration Projects (*Selected by Jury*)

Little Box Sauna Mobile Interactive Public Art
When the Birds Taught me to Fly Walking Theatre
At the Confluence of Science and Nature Mural
Ripple of Life Community Garden (postponed)

They are profiled briefly on the following pages.



THE SOUTH LOOP DISCOVERY CHARRETTE

SUMMER 2014

The first Creative Placemaking Demonstration Project was a week-long Discovery Charrette, held in June 2014 and hosted by McGough at Bloomington Central Station Park. The charrette served as the public launch of creative placemaking in the South Loop and addressed five major objectives:

- **Discovery:** Identify and illustrate the history, purpose and desired identity of the South Loop - building on the brand from the South Loop District Plan. Look closely on the ground and into the past to find out what is distinctive and what is worth celebrating.
- **Community-Building:** Form new relationships and strengthen connections among key constituencies and between existing and new partners.

- **Project Site and Concept Development:** Identify diverse set of sites for future Demonstration Projects and ask the community to generate project ideas for creative placemaking in the South Loop, resulting in a book with 90 entries.
- **Policy Exploration:** Identify links between organizational roles and city policies and regulations, and begin to consider a long range policy framework.
- **Regional Awareness:** Contribute to heightened Metro-wide awareness of: a) the potential of the South Loop and the City's vision for it; b) the discovery and creative placemaking activity underway in the South Loop, and c) the upcoming Demonstration Projects.



The Discovery Charrette engaged a variety of South Loop property owners, other stakeholders, artists, and Artistry and City staff.

Placemakers: With direct support and guidance of the project Core Team, the charrette was led by an Interdisciplinary **Creative Community Builders team: Peter Musty (Charrette Director), Tom Borrup, Carrie Christensen, Tacoumba Aiken, Leah Nelson, Witt Siasoco, Harry Waters Jr.**

Hosts: **Mall of America, McGough and many others**

More Information: <http://www.artistrymn.org>

A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF DISCOVERY CHARRETTE PARTICIPANTS AND ACTIVITIES IS INCLUDED IN APPENDIX A.

2015 COMMISSIONED DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Following the Discovery Charrette, a solicitation process was conducted to select placemakers to implement three to five additional Demonstration Projects during 2015.

WHAT DID THE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS DEMONSTRATE?

The projects were designed to:

- demonstrate that creative placemaking projects, including public art, social practice art, and design interventions, would create excitement and visibility for the South Loop;
- strengthen relationships among the City, Artistry, project partners, South Loop stakeholders, and artists and arts organizations;
- test best practices and organizational capacity to sustain creative placemaking; and
- inspire continued stakeholder investment and engagement in creative placemaking.

THE JURY-COMMISSIONED DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS ARE DESCRIBED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, AND DOCUMENTED BY THE EVENT PHOTOGRAPHY IN APPENDIX B. PLACEMAKER SURVEYS ARE SUMMARIZED IN APPENDIX C. FOR MORE IMAGES AND DOCUMENTATION OF ALL 2014 AND 2015 EVENTS, PLEASE SEE THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON AND ARTISTRY WEBSITES.

HOW EXACTLY DID THE JURY PROCESS WORK? Through a formal, juried selection process, 15 finalists were invited to develop project proposals in partnership with prospective Project Hosts. From the proposals submitted by the 15 finalists, four projects were selected by the jury for commissions of up to \$20,000.

A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR COMMISSIONED DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS IS PROVIDED IN APPENDIX B.



CAPTURING THE GROWING COMMUNITY ENERGY

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF BRUCE SILCOX

Documentation of the 2014 Discovery Charrette, planning process, and the 2015 commissioned demonstration projects was carried out by a mix of writers, videographers, and photographers. Minneapolis photographer Bruce Silcox was assigned to capture the community energy generated at all South Loop events throughout 2014 and 2015. Please see ...

> APPENDIX A 2014 SOUTH LOOP DISCOVERY CHARRETTE



> APPENDIX B 2015 COMMISSIONED DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS





LITTLE BOX SAUNA

WINTER 2015

Little Box Sauna is a mobile warming place that created a visible, small-scale, social space within the large spaces of the South Loop. The sauna made two stops in the South Loop during February and March of 2015: in front of the Radisson Blu at Mall of America, and at IKEA. It created a hub where employees and visitors could socialize in a way that is new to our community, based on Finnish and other cultural traditions. It gave people a destination they could see and walk to – a stopping place between buildings and cars.

Placemakers: **Andrea Johnson and Molly Reichert**

Hosts: **Mall of America, Radisson Blu, IKEA**

More Information: <https://littleboxsauna.wordpress.com>



"We were impressed to see the Mall of America, Radisson Blu, and IKEA coming together to support one project, and hope that our project sparked an idea that businesses can collaborate on even small projects and events to bring cohesion to the community."

- Andrea Johnson and Molly Reichert, creators of Little Box Sauna





CROSS-POLLINATION WALKING THEATER

SPRING 2015

In partnership with the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, PlaceBase Productions (PBP) turned the grounds of the Refuge into a stage for a walking theater production of an original musical titled “*After the Birds Taught Me to Fly.*” PBP used site-specific musical theater, based on stories collected and research conducted by the artists, to explore the places, resources, and initiatives that make the Refuge a common ground where community members can engage and connect to the surrounding river valley. This community-based theater piece added to the shared understanding of the unique role the Refuge plays in shaping the South Loop’s past, present, and future. Four performances were presented on June 6 and 7, 2015.

Placemakers: **Ashley Hanson and Andrew Gaylord**
(PlaceBase Productions)

Host: **Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge**

More Information: <http://placebaseproductions.com/minnesota-valley-national-wildlife-refuge-in-bloomington-south-loop/>

The greatest achievement from the project, according to the placemaker team, was the deep connection that the cast developed to the South Loop as a result of participating in the performance:

“Our cast raved up and down the block about what a great community experience it was, and our audience was generally shocked by what they experienced—generally speaking, such a grand collusion of art and nature.”

- Ashley Hanson and Andrew Gaylord, PlaceBase Productions





AT THE CONFLUENCE OF SCIENCE AND NATURE MURAL SUMMER 2015

Erik Pearson created a large, exterior mural at Cypress Semiconductor bordering the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Bass Ponds parking lot. The mural draws inspiration and images from the history of technology and semiconductors in the South Loop as well as the potential of “green” technologies. The mural expresses the unique blend of science and nature that have shaped the neighborhood’s past and will continue to influence its future.

Placemaker: **Erik Pearson**
 Hosts: **Cypress Semiconductor and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge**
 More Information: <http://www.erikpearsonart.com>



“During my mural process, I already noticed many people driving up just to take a picture of the mural. Now that it's completed, people will continue to visit the mural and then continue on to explore the Bass Ponds trail.” - Muralist Erik Pearson



RIPPLE OF LIFE

(POSTPONED)

Field Artist Tom Henry proposed a circular “ripple” landform, 150 feet in diameter, planted with wheat and surrounded by a blue Russian Sage hedge and a half-circle of yellow sunflowers. A large blue reflective globe in the center would represent a drop of water nourishing the field of beauty and sending out the ripple effect. The piece would begin with earth-forming and planting and end with a harvest of wheat to be processed into loaves of bread for Twin City food shelves. Initially scheduled for installation in spring 2015, the project did not proceed past the design phase because of changes in land ownership and schedule and budget constraints. The City and Artistry hope to work with the artist to implement Ripple of Life or a similar project elsewhere in the South Loop in the future.

Placemaker: **Tom Henry**



ADDITIONAL (CATALYZED) PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

Ideas generated and relationships forged during the NEA grant-funded period led to two additional public art projects commissioned by the City of Bloomington for the South Loop with City funds.

CONVERGENCE SCULPTURE (JAMES BRENNER)

This internally-illuminated, glass and steel sculpture set in a swirl of flowering plants occupies the center of the roundabout at 28th Avenue South and Lindau Lane. The sculpture was installed in August 2015. The project was commissioned by The City of Bloomington.



SIGNAL BOX ART

The City’s Public Works Department has identified nine signal control boxes in the South Loop to wrap with art. The placemakers whose designs will be used will be selected by the City in consultation with Artistry.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The following activities helped to build and strengthen relationships among the City, Artistry, prospective Project Hosts, placemakers, and other stakeholders during the NEA grant-funded period.



Host/Artist Reception and Project Announcement Party

November 2014 – Hosted by the Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Airport Marriott Hotel, this event included a public announcement of the Commissioned Demonstration Projects and provided an opportunity to recognize and celebrate with all the placemakers, Project Hosts, other partners, and community members – past, present, and future – who are inspired by the South Loop's potential.

Host Network and Advisory Committee Lunch

June 2015 – Hosted by IKEA, this event provided an opportunity for City and Artistry staff to describe the momentum phase plan included below and to generate interest among prospective Project Hosts for continued involvement over the next two to four years.



Regional Placemaking Residency Host Site

2014 and 2015 – During the NEA grant-funded period, the opportunity arose for the City to be a partner in the annual Placemaking Residency, coordinated by the St. Paul Riverfront Development Corporation. Participation provided a unique opportunity to expand regional awareness of the South Loop and the creative placemaking activities launched with the NEA grant. The Placemaking Residency brings world-renowned placemaking experts to the Twin Cities to help community members foster metropolitan growth and evolution in ways that improve economic outcomes for residents and businesses and engage diverse and underrepresented community members, among other outcomes. The residency brings together business leaders, public officials, community activists, researchers, arts groups, entrepreneurs, and neighborhood residents to address the issues of our day. The South Loop was a host site for events led by the following Placemaking “residents”:

- in May 2014, **Gil Penalosa**, creator of the “8/80 Communities” concept;
- in May 2015, **Gehl Studio** and **Dr. Richard Jackson** speaking on the intersection of public health and urban design.

ASSESSMENT, EARLY SUCCESSES, & LESSONS LEARNED

An important objective of the NEA grant-funded period was to assess the impact of various activities to begin identifying the most effective creative placemaking approaches and practices for the South Loop. As part of a multi-faceted assessment process, surveys were conducted with Project Hosts, placemakers, and the broader community.

THE DATA GLEANED FROM THE SURVEYS ARE SUMMARIZED IN APPENDIX C.

From the surveys and numerous opportunities to observe and analyze the impact of activities conducted during the NEA grant-funded phase, the Core Team identified the following early successes and lessons learned.

EARLY SUCCESSES

- ✓ Increased stakeholder engagement and stronger connections among South Loop stakeholders.
- ✓ Greater awareness of the South Loop vision within Bloomington and the greater Twin Cities region.
- ✓ Increased understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of creative placemaking across City departments.
- ✓ Greater awareness of strengths and weaknesses of City development and permitting processes relative to creative placemaking activities.
- ✓ Expanded understanding within Artistry of the individuals, networks, and processes connected to creative placemaking in our region.
- ✓ Increased capacity for collaboration among the City, Artistry, and other partners and stakeholders.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Demonstration works.** Creative Placemaking Demonstration Projects help establish a distinctive, “branded” place; build civic/social fabric typical of urban places; inspire existing stakeholders and attract new developers to invest in South Loop; and enliven the district and encourage people to explore.
- **This is just the beginning.** Sustaining creative placemaking requires a long-term commitment of resources. It also requires a solid governance and management foundation with access to technical skills and expertise (e.g., legal, PR/marketing). Building this foundation and cultivating champions takes time and diligence.
- **Placemakers and hosts need support.** Navigating the City review and permitting process and other technical requirements can challenge the capacity of individual placemakers and/or project hosts. Providing guidance and support can be critical in facilitating project implementation.
- **Community-building, urban design, and public art are intertwined within Creative Placemaking.** Often, the most compelling and successful development projects draw from different skill sets and a range of professionals.
- **Balance creativity and capacity.** Don’t underestimate what is possible, but don’t over-commit. Creativity should be honored and encouraged at every step, but a realistic assessment of available human and financial resources is equally important.
- **Ensure interdisciplinary leadership.** A diversity of disciplines and professions should be involved in the governance and management of creative placemaking. Major stakeholder groups should also be represented to ensure that investments serve the needs of the community.

III. CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PLAN



Photograph by B

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PLAN

The NEA grant provided funding to demonstrate the potential of artists and other creative people to foster community-building in the South Loop; sustaining the latter will require the ongoing participation of the district's stakeholders. More specifically, transforming the identity and character of the South Loop is possible only by engaging the neighborhood's property and business owners, workers, residents, and visitors in shaping a distinctive place.

THIS PLAN BUILDS ON THE CITY'S VISION FOR THE SOUTH LOOP AND THE MOMENTUM OF THE NEA GRANT-FUNDED PERIOD BY PROPOSING STAKEHOLDER-INCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES, ACTIVITIES, AND THE FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT THEM.





Walking theater-goers check out the view of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge from the Visitor Center's overlook.

THE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING VISION

The City's intention to integrate creative placemaking in the redevelopment of South Loop was established in the South Loop District Plan. Accordingly, the district vision is a creative placemaking vision in the broadest sense. Underlying this Creative Placemaking Plan is a more specific vision for the arts as a central, core force in the district's transformation: sustained creative placemaking efforts will...

...ESTABLISH THE SOUTH LOOP AS A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION KNOWN FOR WELCOMING CREATIVE PEOPLE AND USING THE ARTS TO TRANSFORM THE NEIGHBORHOOD PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND CULTURALLY.

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING GOALS

To achieve this vision, a set of goals were developed that address critical aspects of the South Loop's transformation. The goals address urbanism, animation, involvement, identity, leadership and investment.

1 URBANISM

Ensure urban design excellence in transforming the built environment. Make sure that private development and public infrastructure support the adopted vision of South Loop as a walkable urban neighborhood and that development is executed with exceptional design, improving the aesthetics and physical distinctiveness of the neighborhood.

2 ANIMATION

Animate public spaces and strengthen the social and cultural fabric. Make the South Loop a destination where people come to explore, gather, linger, and choose to live and invest. As the neighborhood transforms over time, this will require implementing a purposeful, strategic, and sustained range of projects and activities that activate spaces and build community connections in the South Loop.

3 INVOLVEMENT

Involve and empower people who inhabit and care about the South Loop. Involve those who live, work, and own property in South Loop in taking an active role in its transformation. Civic or organizational frameworks for creative placemaking will be successful when they allow the roles and capacities of neighborhood champions to develop based on the needs and activities of constituents and the community.

4 IDENTITY

Elevate and project South Loop's identity. Promote the South Loop in active, strategic, and consistent ways to expand awareness of its location, assets, and future potential within the neighborhood and beyond its boundaries. Developing pride of place and a sense of shared identity will come through the discovery, documentation, and celebration of the South Loop's history and unique assets.

5 LEADERSHIP

Build capacity to sustain leadership and champions. Foster continued engagement of current leaders and champions while actively building and broadening the base of ongoing support and participation in creative placemaking.

6 INVESTMENT

Establish a resident creative sector. Promote creative and cultural activities and attract artists, designers, and other creative people to work, live, and implement projects in South Loop. Work to attract new development, residences, and work spaces catering to the creative sector and continually seek opportunities for shared creative and cultural experiences.



GETTING THERE

FROM PRESENT REALITY TO FUTURE VISION

Over the NEA grant-funded period, the City, Artistry, and other partners conducted a range of activities and explorations to better understand how to apply creative placemaking strategies in the South Loop. From these efforts, the partners learned much about the capacities, attitudes, realities, and possibilities affecting future creative placemaking work.

KEY INSIGHTS

- ⇒ Sustaining creative placemaking and integrating it into the transformation and community-building processes in the South Loop and eventually City-wide **will require a solid organizational structure and dedicated human and financial resources.**
- ⇒ In the meantime, the energy and excitement generated during the NEA grant-funded period cannot be allowed to subside. For creative placemaking to firmly take root, **it is critical to leverage and build on this momentum.**
- ⇒ During the early years of transformation in the South Loop and until a stronger fabric of district-based leadership and capacity coalesces, **it is necessary that the City, in partnership with Artistry, take the lead** in creative placemaking activities, working closely with district stakeholders and constituencies.

MOMENTUM PHASE

The Momentum Phase comprises the next two to four years of creative placemaking in the South Loop, starting in late 2015. Described below are governance and management structures for this phase, the sources and uses of funds, and possible activities to be implemented.

GOVERNANCE

The City Council will establish a Creative Placemaking Advisory Commission. Six members will be appointed by the City Council and three by the Artistry Board. The Commission's duties will be to:

- Establish creative placemaking strategies and an annual work plan.
- Promote and market creative placemaking in the South Loop, the City, and the region.
- Help decide resource use and approve placemaker and project selection methods.
- Maintain relationships with Project Hosts and partners.
- Make annual progress reports to the Council and Artistry.

MANAGEMENT

A management structure is required to execute the strategies and work plans approved by the Commission and to implement and coordinate the activities described below. During the Momentum Phase, the management structure will comprise a part-time **Creative Placemaking (CP) Director** employed by the City, contracted artistic services provided by Artistry, consultant assistance, and City staff in various departments actively contributing to creative placemaking efforts.

The CP Director will be the primary administrator of creative placemaking efforts in the South Loop.

Accountable to the Commission and the City Manager, the CP Director will:

- support and facilitate the Commission's work;
- develop and administer annual budgets;
- connect creative placemaking to South Loop stakeholders;
- oversee the Artistry contract;
- participate in the selection processes for placemakers and projects;
- hire and manage consultants; and
- engage employees across the City to achieve the goals set forth in this Plan.

The Director will also have primary responsibility for community relations in the South Loop, including raising awareness of the neighborhood's identity inside and outside its boundaries, connecting the neighborhood's diverse stakeholders, and engaging the stakeholders in the neighborhood's development. Lastly, the CP Director will research and pursue private sources of funding to supplement public funds available for placemaking in the Momentum Phase, and work with Artistry, the Commission, and South Loop stakeholders to determine how to sustain creative placemaking after the Momentum Phase in the South Loop and beyond.

The City will contract with Artistry for services necessary to develop and implement permanent and temporary creative placemaking projects, including identifying potential sites and projects, identifying and selecting artists, designers, architects and other creative people (collectively, "placemakers") for project commissions, supporting placemakers through permitting and other regulatory processes, and facilitating placemaker/Project Host relationships.

The CP Director will secure consultant assistance for certain tasks requiring specialized expertise. Examples of potential consultant services include contract development and review; branding, marketing, and communications; grant-writing; and project evaluation.

The CP Director will partner with Artistry to engage and expand the knowledge base of City Staff involved in development and infrastructure design to ensure that creative placemaking is integrated into the City’s approach to development on an ongoing basis.

BUDGET

A \$400,000 annual budget will fund creative placemaking in the South Loop during the Momentum Phase. **The proposed funding source during the Momentum Phase is the South Loop Development Fund, a portion of the City’s liquor and lodging taxes.** Because the proposed funding source is dedicated to the South Loop, creative placemaking during this phase will be South Loop-focused until additional revenue sources are identified.

COMPONENT	INVESTMENT	NOTES
Commissions	\$270,000	
Major	\$150,000	Comparable to James Brenner sculpture
Minor	\$120,000	Three @ \$40,000 each
Miscellaneous Support	\$8,000	
Conservation	\$2,000	
Events	\$6,000	Four/year @ \$1,500 each
Staff	\$45,000	
Creative Placemaking Director	\$45,000	0.33-0.5 FTE
Contracted Expertise	\$77,000	
Artistry Expertise	\$35,000	
PR/Marketing/Branding	\$25,000	
Legal	\$5,000	
Evaluation	\$12,000	
GRAND TOTAL	\$400,000	

The City’s long-term intent is to expand creative placemaking beyond South Loop, diversify the funding sources, add staff and consultant capacity, and broaden the enthusiasm for and impact of creative placemaking throughout Bloomington. The budget below covers annual costs for staffing, consultants, project commissions, and associated support costs during the Momentum Phase.

ACTIVITIES

Creative Placemaking activities during the Momentum Phase continue the approach of “learning by doing.” The activities are intended to develop a distinctive and shared identity by employing creative people and practices that build constructive relationships and incorporate features and events drawn from the South Loop’s natural environment and human history. They are also intended to foster a sense of collective responsibility and ownership in the South Loop’s transformation.

It is not expected that all the activities listed on the following pages will be accomplished during the Momentum Phase. Rather, they represent possible actions that build on the lessons learned during the NEA grant-funded period and advance the plan goals.



Photograph by Bruce Silcox

ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

Foster ongoing, coordinated, proactive interactions among South Loop land and business owners, workers, residents, visitors, and other stakeholders.

Provide opportunities for stakeholder participation in creative placemaking project selection and other community-building activities, such as:

- *guided neighborhood tours and organized explorations*
- *launches and unveilings*
- *celebrations*
- *contests/competitions*



BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Cultivate a network of engaged Project Hosts through:

- *e-newsletters and other periodic communications*
- *active and passive use of social media*
- *happy hours and other networking events*
- *awards/recognition of individuals*
- *formal membership*
- *contests/competitions*

Organize and host leadership events, such as:

- *panels and discussions*
- *collaboration and engagement with other entities in the region on creative placemaking initiatives (i.e. annual Placemaking Residency)*

Develop resources and structures to support placemakers and Project Hosts, such as:

- *placemaker database/roster*
- *roster of prospective selection jury members*
- *checklists/other tools to guide placemakers through public processes related to permits, etc.*
- *training for hosts working with placemakers*



COMMISSION PROJECTS

- Identify and recruit prospective placemakers
- Develop contract administration procedures
- Establish policies and best practices for conservation and maintenance of public art
- Raise funds (e.g., through grants and sponsorships) and encourage private commissions to supplement public funding available for commissions and other creative placemaking activities



ELEVATE AND PROJECT SOUTH LOOP'S IDENTITY

- Initiate strategic public/media relations to inform region about South Loop and creative placemaking activities
- Coordinate with other regional entities on creative placemaking initiatives (e.g., annual Placemaking Residency)
- Develop brand standards, website, and dedicated social media channel to build awareness of South Loop and foster interaction among South Loop stakeholders
- Engage placemakers in creating unique, memorable signage and other landmarks to facilitate way-finding and reinforce neighborhood identity
- Implement a social media campaign targeted at primary stakeholders, containing event calendars and other opportunities for both on-line and in-person participation



ANIMATE PUBLIC SPACES AND STRENGTHEN THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FABRIC - *CELEBRATIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS*

Organize community events around project launches and unveilings

Commission placemakers to design active, socially-engaging projects that add opportunities for interaction and collaboration among land and business owners, workers, residents, and visitors

Encourage and facilitate temporary/seasonal art installations

Encourage themed events and celebrations that introduce energy and liveliness in strategically important places (e.g., markets on Lindau Lane; Park(ing) Day events using American Boulevard east of 34th Ave; performances in BCS Central Park)

Explore partnerships with existing Bloomington events and organizations that could take place in the South Loop



TRANSFORM THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT – *PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT / INFRASTRUCTURE / WALKABILITY*

Identify key sites for public art and other design interventions

Engage placemakers in creating unique, memorable signage and other landmarks to facilitate way-finding and reinforce neighborhood identity

Ensure CP Director/Artistry participation in design review of all proposed South Loop projects (including all public infrastructure improvements and private development projects) to seek opportunities to advance the creative placemaking goals of this plan –

SEE APPENDIX C: PLACEMAKING CHECKLIST

When possible and practical, include creative professionals, experienced public artists, and urban designers in the early, mid-stage, and final review processes

Use opportunities to incorporate public art into public infrastructure (i.e., utility box wraps, creative pedestrian-crossing identification)

Encourage private property owners/developers to create building frontages that form active, safe, and walkable streets and spaces, and to incorporate public art in their sites and buildings



ATTRACT NEW DEVELOPMENT AND FOSTER THE CREATIVE SECTOR

Experiment with new, proactive strategies to recruit developers interested in carrying out the district plan's goals

Facilitate development of artist housing, live/work, and studio space for artists and other creative people

Participate in the City's budgeting for incentives to foster the creative placemaking vision

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING ACTIVITIES ARE INTENDED TO DEVELOP A DISTINCTIVE AND SHARED IDENTITY BY EMPLOYING CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PRACTICES THAT BUILD CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND INCORPORATE FEATURES AND EVENTS DRAWN FROM THE SOUTH LOOP'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN HISTORY.

THEY ARE ALSO INTENDED TO FOSTER A SENSE OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY AND OWNERSHIP IN THE SOUTH LOOP'S TRANSFORMATION.



*PLEASE VISIT THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL!
CLICK ON [South Loop's Youtube Playlist](#) FOR VIDEOGRAPHY AND
REPORTING ON SOUTH LOOP'S ONGOING URBAN
TRANSFORMATION AND CREATIVE PLACEMAKING ACTIVITY.*



EVALUATION

Formal and informal evaluation methods will be key to determining which creative placemaking activities and approaches most effectively achieve the goals in this plan and how creative placemaking activities can be improved as the City moves beyond the Momentum Phase. The CP Director is responsible for recommending evaluation approaches to the CP Advisory Commission and including evaluation in reports to the City Council and Artistry Board, using consultant expertise as required.

APPENDIX F CONTAINS AN OVERVIEW OF CREATIVE PLACEMAKING INDICATORS.



Above: Bloomington's Continental Ballet Company and Bloomington Fire Department co-hosted an Ice Cream Social in BCS Park during the 2014 South Loop Discovery Charrette. The event was designed to draw families with children out for fun in the South Loop—and to encourage community voting on the dozens of Idea Prize submissions.

MOVING BEYOND MOMENTUM

During the Momentum Phase, the City, Artistry, and other partners will continue learning which creative placemaking activities and approaches work best in achieving the South Loop vision. Equally important, they will develop a deeper understanding of the extent and type of human and financial resources required to sustain placemaking over the long term, and how these resources can be best organized and deployed.

Moving beyond the Momentum Phase involves several aims:

- **Create new paradigms** so creative placemaking is fully integrated into the City's approach to development and community-building.
- **Reach larger, more diverse audiences** for arts and culture programming within the City by literally taking art to the streets.
- **Enhance the whole city** by expanding creative placemaking efforts and funding to all of Bloomington.
- **Ensure long-term stability** by creating governance, management, and funding structures that allow Bloomington to sustain and expand creative placemaking activities for decades to come.
- **Identify and engage cross-sector champions** who understand the power of creative placemaking to build social fabric and establish distinctive community identity.

The insights developed during the Momentum Phase will inform planning for creative placemaking in the South Loop and City-wide and will provide a basis for future refinements of activities, governance, management, and funding.

THE CASE STUDIES IN APPENDIX E DESCRIBE A RANGE OF POTENTIAL MODELS THAT THE CITY MIGHT ADOPT OR ADAPT IN MOVING BEYOND MOMENTUM.

These models could include one or more of the following:

RELATED TO MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE:

- Special service districts/business improvement districts (BIDs)
- Neighborhood or voluntary business associations/nonprofits
- City-sponsored neighborhood improvement organizations and districts
- Public/nonprofit partnerships formalized as councils and other entities

RELATED TO FUNDING AND INCENTIVES:

- Development flexibility
- General fund allocations
- Sign revenue sharing
- Percent for art ordinances
- Special assessments
- Corporate sponsorships
- Grants from various governmental entities and foundations

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

Suggested practices to be explored and potentially adopted during and beyond the Momentum Phase include:

- **Interdisciplinary Jury.** When placemaker/project selection juries are used, ensure that they reflect cultural and sector diversity and engage key stakeholders as well as those with artistic and technical expertise.
- **“Host Network” Development.** Continued outreach and engagement of current and new Project Hosts is crucial to fostering their ongoing participation in creative placemaking projects and activities. This core of stakeholders serves as the foundation for long-range community-building.
- **Permit/Project Review Facilitation.** Navigating the City’s permit review process can be challenging. Establish a point person to facilitate the movement of atypical “development” projects through the City’s review process.
- **Checklist of Placemaking Principles.** These will be tested and refined. These principles can act as a checklist by which proposed projects can be judged fairly. This list of principles can also be used as an educational tool and as a metric for projects, both public and private. *A PROPOSED SET OF BASIC GUIDELINES OR PRINCIPLES IS DESCRIBED IN APPENDIX D.*
- **Placemakers Roster.** Develop a database of creative placemaking professionals (including but not limited to public artists, designers, event organizers or social practice artists, performers and graphic artists, muralists, or other creative professionals). Membership would require periodic renewal and would include several benefits including increased access to Project Hosts and invitation to host network events and invitation or inclusion in South Loop events.

- **Arts Organization Involvement.** Provide opportunities to integrate arts programming produced by Artistry in various media, as well as the programming of other arts organizations based in Bloomington and surrounding communities.
- **Project Documentation.** Continue investing in professional documentation of creative placemaking projects through various media such as photography, videography, and thorough written coverage by paid professionals.



PLACEMAKING CHECKLIST

URBANISM

- Will it support implementation of the adopted district vision and plan?
- Will it exhibit urban design excellence?

ANIMATION

- Will it animate public space?
- Will it cultivate the visible presence of social and cultural fabric?

INVOLVEMENT

- Will it involve or empower individuals and constituent communities?
- Will it be produced/made/conducted through or by means of the creative energy of local people or local organizations?

IDENTITY

- Will it discover and/or celebrate district identity?
- Will it elevate or project the district’s brand?

LEADERSHIP

- Will it build or sustain capacities?
- Will it encourage development of leadership and champions?

INVESTMENT

- Will it attract more development?
- Will it foster development of the creative sector in the district?