North St. Paul
Public Art Participation Process Proposal

Growing Capacity to Create Place and Build Community

Prepared for: North St. Paul Department of Community Development
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December 3, 2013
This project was supported by the Resilient Communities Project (RCP), a program at the University of Minnesota that convenes the wide-ranging expertise of U of M faculty and students to address strategic local projects that advance community resilience and sustainability. RCP is a program of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) and the Institute on the Environment.

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Space 2 Place (S2P) is pleased to submit our response to your request for proposal for engagement in public art planning. Our team, along in partnership with the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD), the Economic Development Authority, and the North St. Paul Business Association, looks forward to working with North St. Paul residents and City staff to develop an inclusive and creative participation process.

Our approach is not only collaborative, but also focuses on reinvigorating the arts in North St. Paul in a variety of ways. Through a large arts festival, and small pop-up arts events, our approach is based on creative place-based techniques that focus on creating shared experiences through art itself.

We seek to engage a wide range of North St. Paul residents and a diverse group of stakeholders to engage in creative and interactive placemaking projects. The goals of our planning process include:

- Empowering residents to choose the direction they would like to incorporate public art into the City.
- Inviting residents to engage with the built environment by reinvigorating spaces with creative placemaking tactics.
- Creating opportunities to build social capital and community capacity to establish long-term buy-in from community members.
- Establishing broad based involvement in the arts including youth and seniors and connecting this broad base of art supporters to similar projects proposed in the community (e.g. community gardening).

An important component of our outreach is the involvement of stakeholders. Our process specifically focuses on growing a base of engaged and interested community members interested in fostering arts in the City. We propose to do this through ad hoc, grass roots inspired projects such as storycorps inspired sharing booths, and permanent art installations. Through these techniques, we hope to engage community members in North St. Paul to decide where, when and how they would like to incorporate arts into their City.

We look forward to working with you and the North St. Paul residents and stakeholders to establish a process that is inviting, empowering, art-based and flexible to the needs of this community.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ferber
Michael Krantz
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Introduction

The purpose of this proposal is to facilitate the incorporation of public art into North St. Paul by means of creating a planning process and more importantly, a process that is focused on community engagement in a unique and creative way.

In recent years, North St. Paul has expressed a desire to pursue a number of forward-looking initiatives, including ‘living streets,’ community gardens and the engagement of underrepresented groups. Most relevantly, the city is also interested in creating their own Public Arts Plan. This proposal recommends a public engagement process aimed at shaping the Public Arts Plan and achieving broader civic goals.

This proposal begins by setting the context and defining the overall goals and approach of the plan and participation process. The second section focuses on the specific goals of participation and the techniques engaged to attain those goals. The report concludes with a work plan, which details specifically how we will implement the plan.

Context

In order to design an effective participation plan, it is first necessary to understand the context in which the plan would be implemented. One of the most important facets of North St. Paul is its tightly knit social fabric and its strong sense of community. Much of this process proposal is focused on developing existing assets in the City. This is described in more detail in the approach of the process but it is important to note that one of North St. Paul’s strongest existing assets is its residents. Connecting with an existing base of engaged and well-informed residents is key to respecting the existing community in North St. Paul while presenting new ideas.

As Jane Jacobs, an urban critic suggests, “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody” (Jacobs, 1961). S2P would like to emulate this ideology as it connects to the sense of place already existing in North St. Paul. This sense of place is created by the residents themselves, their experiences, and demographic characteristics such as age, race, and language spoken.

The effectiveness of participation efforts vary according to the demographics of the population. For example, millennials may be more responsive to digital outreach efforts, minorities may require translation, retirees may prefer meeting locations that require minimal travel. The list goes on. Thus, this engagement process is designed in light of the goals the programming proposed and the unique characteristics of the stakeholders in city proposed and the unique characteristics of the stakeholders in city.
Demographics

North St. Paul is a city of 11,387 residents (according to the 2010 US Census) in the northeast Twin Cities metropolitan area. As an inner-ring suburban city, its population grew most rapidly between the 1950’s and the 1970’s. By the 1990’s the city was almost fully developed with little remaining vacant land. Since that peak, the population has been relatively stable, with a slight decline.

In North St. Paul, there are multiple demographic considerations that have a bearing on the design of the engagement process. First, the population in the City is relatively older than the rest of the region, as can be seen in the graphs. This suggests that participatory tools such as digital media may be overall less effective than if the population were younger. It may also suggest that there are more households with children. Being responsible for children can make attending public meetings a challenge. Transportation can also be a challenge for aging residents. S2P has kept this in mind and recommends locating meetings and activities in an easily accessible venue in order to minimize barriers to their participation.

Another consideration is that North St. Paul also has a lower income than the region as a whole. This is evident by looking at median incomes, property values and rents (all of which can be found in the American Community Survey). For example, median household income in the city is $53,000 per year while median household income in the region is over $65,000 per year. Along a similar vein, North St. Paul residents, on average, receive less formal education than the region as a whole. Specifically, a high percentage of residents discontinue their education after high school. This would require a more fine grained analysis to determine, but these factors may suggest that civic literacy is a problem for some residence or that they don’t have adequate access to newspapers or online information (PES&J, 2006). More creative and proactive efforts would be useful in overcoming this engagement barrier. A couple of ideas include ensuring ample opportunity for oral engagement as well as reaching out to these residents through their social circles.

Finally, North St. Paul on the whole is racially homogenous. 79% of the residents are white and 89% speak English at home. Even so, that leaves a large number of residents that are minorities or do not speak english well. This has a number of implications. First, engaging these residents may require reaching out to different cultural institutions. It will also be important to provide meeting and engagement information in multiple languages. Finally, portions of this cohort may be less familiar with general civic processes. Providing a more thorough explanation of the intent and value of meetings as well as describing how residents can influence the public arts plan may help reduce barriers to involvement.

While demographics and geographic traits certainly represent parts of this community, North St. Paul has also cultivated a sense of place that is difficult to measure through data alone. This sense of place is palpable when visiting or talking with community members. It is reflected in a strong sense of pride and community cohesion around being a small town with big goals. Events in the City are well attended, City Council is active and the drive to create change and harness energy from this engaged community is apparent thought the diversity of projects the community proposed through the Resilient Communities Project.
The most prominent piece of public art in North St. Paul is the world’s largest stucco snowman. The 54-foot tall snowman, which used to sit on the southeast corner of 7th Ave and Margaret Street (the downtown area) is now located just off Highway 36. An additional major attraction in the area includes the North St. Paul History Cruze Car Show. This car show has been held since 1996, and lasts 3 month summer festival from June to September. This event is held by a non-profit group of 30 volunteers of North St. Paul History Cruizers, and it is sponsored by local businesses.

S2P proposes utilizing the existing enthusiasm around the car show to incorporate art activities during the same time frame. The car show draws crowds that come to see cars parked along a half-mile stretch of 7th Avenue. The street closes to other traffic for the night. It is a fair like atmosphere that prevails with street vendors, music and food selling. This atmosphere is conducive to an arts festival as well which could happen simultaneously, and capitalize on the existing crowds.

Recently, the new Veterans Park broke ground and development is progressing. This new park provides a great opportunity to include new art work that could honor veterans and the rich history of North St. Paul.

Precedent Public Arts Plans

Other cities and communities have developed successful public art plans through inclusive participation processes. S2P regularly tracks these kind of projects and learns from their successes and missed opportunities. A great precedent like Seattle’s Central District’s 2011 public art plan provides an example of how a community can frame a show. This public participation events to foster success for the plan and build the capacity of residents to engage in the future. The Central District community held a series of workshops focusing on key identifying issues, using the events to foster dialogue among neighbors, include art from the outset and provide an organization structure that the community could use after the plan was completed.

Alternatively, another precedent project provides an example of what S2P seeks to avoid in the participation planning process. While the San Diego 2004 Public Art Master Plan provides many valuable suggestions of ways for policymakers to advance the arts, the process of creating the plan itself involved very few residents. While consultants like S2P were hired to do research, they simply create opportunities for dialogue or feedback. Most of the planning decisions were made by a small steering committee who engaged in interviews with community leaders, but never reached out to a broader public. Focus groups and charrettes were limited to design professionals and those already engaged in the process, instead of used to include new members of the public in the process.

Learning from these examples, S2P proposes a public art participation process that seeks to engage a wide range of North St. Paul residents in an interactive and creative process that stimulates new ideas, empowers residents to take ownership of their public spaces, and builds community capacity to continue the act of placemaking beyond the time frame of the planning process.

“Through art planning, neighbors can find consensus on ideas, prioritize projects, and initiate the momentum to bring more art into public spaces. At a time when budgets are tight and art funding is being cut across the board, public engagement in the development of a public art plan is the first step in acting together to bring about the creative and meaningful social change that public art provides.”

– Seattle Central District Public Art Plan
Many communities like North St. Paul are now coming together to reinvigorate urban spaces with people-friendly characteristics like public art, events, sidewalk improvements, downtown facade improvement programs and more. Cities throughout history have featured civic spaces and public art that reflected their culture and helped to give their communities character, but while many communities North St. Paul recognizes the importance of doing so, few cities are in a position to create new swaths of public land or commission massive, iconic structures. Instead, cities across the world are discovering that public art is not created simply through iconic and static objects, but also through more transient art and events and the process that leads to their creation.

By stimulating iterative interactions and community dialogue, a successful participation process around public art is part of that placemaking initiative. S2P’s participation process plan is centered around developing existing assets in North St. Paul to reinvigorate urban spaces with people-friendly characteristics. This participatory process can create a virtuous cycle that shapes the environment to facilitate even more social interaction and further improve quality of life (Silderberg 2013). S2P understands that the process of facilitating community participation in North St. Paul’s efforts to develop a Public Art plan is arguably just as important as the resultant plan itself.

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S2P proposes a public participation program that emphasizes the “making” of placemaking and provides an array of opportunities for residents to engage in and creatively contribute to the process. By strategically engaging a wide range of residents through creative, iterative and ongoing actions and events, S2P can help empower the North St. Paul community to not only create a public art plan that reflects the city’s existing character, but also to establish a thriving network of people and resources that continuously strengthens the livability of North St. Paul’s public space and improves the community’s overall quality of life.

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S2P proposes that the participation process is itself a form of public art, consisting of creative, temporary events designed to “activate” spaces and encourage interaction. By engaging a range of residents (both veteran, “usual suspects” and by empowering residents to take on initiatives alongside organizers and city staff. S2P strives to incorporate these three conditions along with other creative approaches to spur the engagement process and foster a sense of empowerment and excitement around the possibilities for public art.
Goals

The goals of this engagement program are broad but achievable. S2P believes that it is important to place this participation process within the broader context of North St. Paul’s efforts to grow community engagement. Some of the goals of the public art participation process listed below are specific to the public art plan and others support a broader community vision as expressed by the North St. Paul community.

1. **Determine the kind of art that residents desire**

The options for the form of public art are seemingly endless. Determining what art is appropriate for North St. Paul is up to the community. Finding art forms that are broadly supported by the community will have a direct impact on the staying power of that art. As such, engaging the community in determining the style(s) of art to pursue is a central goal of this plan.

2. **Determine where residents would like to add art**

The environment of an art piece can be as important as the installation itself. It could be located in parks, downtown, residential areas or near streets and trails. The participation process aims to explain the range of options and determine where residents would like to see art installed or performed, as the case may be.

3. **Identify and engage community assets**

Every community is endowed with its own unique set of assets. These assets may take the form of relationships, historical knowledge, artistic skills, or leadership skills, among a great many others. Identifying these assets and effectively weaving them into the social fabric of the community is a key goal of this participation plan.

4. **Build social capital**

This is a broad but very important goal. There is very real societal value in social networks (Putnam, 2000). Minnesota is known for having a relative abundance of social capital, and North St. Paul is in a great position to improve its own. Within this goal is an attempt to develop ‘embedded’ deliberation as a conduit through which to cultivate social capital and strengthen the community’s fabric. Embedded deliberation focuses on broad and long-term involvement as opposed to limited involvement for a limited goal (Fagotto and Fung, 2008).

Stakeholders

In addition to utilizing expertise from former arts council participants, we seek to partner with the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD), and local leaders in the Economic Development Authority. Incorporating the civic engagement processes outlined in this proposal, will also include collaborating with North St. Paul businesses to partner with the Facade Improvement Program offered by the City. By incorporating these existing organizations, S2P hopes maintain long-term partnerships with MCCD and the business community in North St. Paul.

Identifying stakeholders and stakeholder analysis

Although the population in North St. Paul is relatively small, there are a large variety of stakeholders that can and should be apart of this process. S2P is cognizant not only of the objectives of the participation process but also of who should be engaged and when, power dynamics, and best way to organize and engage stakeholders. One way to accomplish outlining potential stakeholders is through a power and interest chart. Through charting out the various stakeholders listed below, and continually revisiting these charts, S2P will have a documented and thorough approach in which to identify stakeholders as the process evolves.

Business Community

Much of the programming involved in this proposal occurs in the downtown area of North St. Paul. Attracting community members to participate in the public arts planning process will inevitably attract more people to the central business district. We hope that as a byproduct, participants will patronize local businesses who very well may be sponsoring these projects. Local businesses will have the opportunity to sponsor art projects by providing physical space outside of their storefronts as well as financial support. While not mandatory, sponsorship is win-win for both business owners and the arts community. Sponsorship provides an opportunity for business owners to advertise and market their businesses, and potential for increased foot traffic to their storefronts when arts events take place in the downtown business district. Based on four prior sponsorship opportunities proposed by the former arts council, local business will have the opportunity to engage with this process though events that were similar to those in proposed in 2008:

- Art on the Street (street chalk drawing contest),
- Spring Art Exhibit (an exhibit by invitation for local organizations to present their art to the public)
- Fall Art Exhibit (an exhibit of local artists’ 2 and 3-dimensional pieces)
- Snow Frolics: Snow Carvings (snow sculptures along 7th Avenue).
Funders

Funding for projects both large and small scale should not be a burden to local business who may partner to sponsor projects. In addition to partnering with local business in North St. Paul, there are a variety of financial backing for more permanent funding available from organizations around Minnesota. Because the state has a decentralized funding system for the arts, the Forum of Regional Arts Councils of Minnesota (http://www.arts.state.mn.us/racs/forum.htm) is a hub for funding options. City staff or members of the Arts Council would be highly qualified to write grants to seek funding from these sources. In addition to the Regional Arts Council resources, http://www.mncitizensforthearts.org/learn/grantsinfo/ provides connections to private pro-art foundations and philanthropists. The Minnesota State Arts Board (http://www.arts.state.mn.us/) also provides grants for "Partners in Art Participation" pilot program which offers funding up to $25000. Tapping into regional and statewide resources is key once community members in North St. Paul are further along in the participatory process and establish what kind of projects they would like to see in the city.

Youth

Input and feedback from youth is often overlooked in planning processes. S2P’s goal is to incorporate a diverse range of stakeholders and participants in the arts process, including youth and young adults in North St. Paul. We seek to collaborate with District 622 schools to incorporate arts activities in after school programs. Youth are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the arts festival, pop-up events, and submit their own artwork in potential juried shows or other exhibits. We would also encourage a youth representative to join the arts council to include a young generation perspective.

Seniors

North St. Paul has an active population of senior citizens, many of whom have been involved in Resilient Communities Project (RCP) activities already. S2P seeks to tap into this energized group of seniors who are participating in RCP projects to add their voice to the arts planning process as well. Seniors in North St. Paul are especially knowledgeable about the culture and history of the city. S2P recognizes the importance of local knowledge and sensitivity to maintaining a strong connection to the historical aspects of North St. Paul while introducing new and exciting public arts projects. arts projects.

University of Minnesota Resilient Communities Project

As mentioned, RCP has multiple existing ties with the residents of North St. Paul. While RCP will wrap up at the end of the 2013-2014 school year, the relationships with North St. Paul and University of Minnesota will continue. S2P would like to be a part of this partnership and continue the relationship with the University and North St. Paul by connecting willing University arts faculty and students to provide support and encouragement to ongoing arts projects in the City. Continuing this partnership will allow for more student participation and increase potential to establish long-term arts projects with continued support from University resources. There is a wealth of potential in utilizing connections with the University. For example, students can provide internship hours to help write grants, facilitate meetings, and even create pop-up events.

Tourists and visitors: Connecting to the Gateway Trail

S2P sees potential in developing wayfinding signage through murals or other art projects to better connect users of the Gateway Trail into the City. The snowman off Highway 36 is a great start to this effort. Using place-based techniques detailed later in this proposal, is one way to establish more art along the trail and increase visibility of North St. Paul to tourists and visitors to the area. Establishing exactly where to place such signage or murals will be at the discretion of North St. Paul residents and those engaged in the participatory planning processes.

Arts Council and City Staff

Reestablishing the Arts Council is one way to link local governmental back to the community led efforts we propose. There is flexibility in the way this council can be established, and where during the phases of the process they can fit in. With such a community-led approach to incorporating arts into the City, we foresee most decisions made by community members, but encourage them to be part of study circles, advisory teams and in other leadership roles.
The Participation Plan

Potential Barriers to Engagement

The stakeholders outlined in this plan is just a starting point of whom can, and should be involved in the planning process. It is important to keep in mind potential barriers that may themselves pop-up during the process. These potential challenges could include engagement fatigue, unclear objectives and funding challenges, and establishing long-term buy in and commitment from City staff and community residents.

To combat some of these issues, S2P has suggested ways to incorporate those who are not usually involved in civic activities to be more and more involved in the process as the arts plan comes to fruition and the community decides what they would like to see in the City.

Creative Placemaking Agencies

Recently, Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis concluded a successful project titled “This is Our City” which incorporated City of Minneapolis planners and local artists who worked with youth and arts projects to engage residents in City planning processes. This collaboration resulted in three creative projects that increased community dialog around civic issues. Although these projects were based in the Twin Cities on a much larger scale, the model in which they were carried out could be very applicable in North St. Paul. “This is Our City” was successful in engaging underrepresented communities in developing “vibrant urban spaces.” North St. Paul could take advantage of their recent successes and lessons learned through their similar engagement process. (http://www.intermediaarts.org/This-Is-Our-City).

Artists

Artists themselves are an obvious key stakeholder in establishing more public art in the City. Through the place making activities described in our techniques and work program, S2P invites artists of all skill levels to contribute to the arts scenes. The arts festival provides an opportunity for professional artists to display their work. More causal events throughout the year such as such as opportunities for sidewalk chalk art allow for all skill sets to contribute to the arts scene.

By partnering with some funding sources, S2P foresees the possibility of inviting professional artists to be more and more involved in the process as the arts plan comes to fruition and the community decides what they would like to see in the City.
Techniques

S2P proposes a wide variety of methods to engage the public in developing the Arts Plan. These methods include new technologies (e.g. social media) and innovative interactive events (e.g. pop-up parklets), as well as more traditional participation events like open houses. The mixture of techniques will help capture the input of a diverse cross-section of participants, including those who are traditionally underrepresented as well as the “usual suspects” in participation processes.

These techniques can be divided into three general categories; events, outreach/interaction and advertisement. Events include the most active engagement strategies while outreach/interactions attempt to reduce barriers to involvement. Interactive techniques are generally used to augment meetings, but they are broader than that. The final category captures methods of advertising and miscellaneous involvement (such as through social media). All of our methods are listed below.

Arts Fest

S2P proposes an Arts Fest that will be central to the success of the engagement plan. This proposed event is a keystone to our proposal and serves innumerable invaluable functions. Structurally, the event could take a variety of different shapes, and the final format will depend on the further deliberation with city staff. However, our broad vision of the event sees an Arts Fest taking place in on 7th Avenue in downtown North St. Paul at the beginning of the summer. The Fest could be a one-day or weekend-long affair, depending on the scope. The street would be lined with tents with local crafts and food as well as live music. This event could be tied to North St. Paul’s iconic summer car show in order to draw attendance, or held separately altogether if residents and city staff think it could succeed on its own.

The goal of the Arts Fest is to advertise the Arts Plan planning and participation processes in a fun and public way. The Fest could either be a one-time event that informs the public about the public art plan, or it could begin to attract residents to the ideas of public art and start to form new community interest in the subject. S2P will create a framework for the event and make it replicable and available to any North St. Paul residents interested in pursuing subsequent events.

The Fest itself would showcase crafts made by residents themselves. This will be a good way to identify proactive and artistic residents. These folks will make good candidates for team leaders or a future arts council (discussed further below). They also may be good candidates for creating future art. The Arts Fest is a perfect venue to highlight those existing community assets. In addition, North St. Paul can invite regional artists to advertise their work. This will give residents a chance to see what’s out there and speak with the artists that are create public art. Finally, include a Arts Plan booth to advertise the upcoming engagement plan and invite interested volunteers.

As a final thought, the Arts Fest could be tied with other current or future community initiatives. This might be an ideal opportunity to advertise community gardens, reach youth, seniors & busy families, discuss revitalization of downtown, etc. Further opportunities available through the Arts Fest will be discussed below.
Creative workshops (charrettes)

Charrettes are intensive brainstorm sessions, ranging from several hours to a number of days. Charrettes are a great way to get people thinking creatively about how they would like to incorporate art into their community. For this proposal, a traditional charrette format of a 4-day retreat would be less helpful than several short and fast brainstorm sessions, hosted at a variety of times to accommodate residents with different busy schedules. Charrettes will provide free snacks and childcare (in fact, children are encouraged to participate themselves). Several breakout brainstorms, group ideation ice-breakers, collaborative drawings and other activities will lead to a long list of ideas. The goal of the charrette is to come up with as many ideas as possible—there are no bad ideas—in order to bring as many people to the “drawing table” as possible and to encourage creative approaches to the public art plan.

School events

Introducing children to art-making is part of our proposal and an important component of supporting public art. Children not only bring energy and vitality to events like the Arts Fest, but they also engage their parents and can provide an opportunity for entire families to participate in the planning process through their presence. A series of creative events (resembling charrettes) will be hosted at several local elementary, middle and high schools. Children engagement in these events will be combined with existing art education: children will be asked to draw what they think the future of their streets and will be guided by art teachers.

“Classic” public meetings

Monthly public meetings will be hosted in an open house format to allow interested residents to receive updates on the public art plan planning process, as well as the ongoing participation process, and voice feedback or opinions. These more “traditional” meetings will be held in city hall or the public library and be used to engage residents who are expecting conventional outreach approaches by the city of North St. Paul. These meetings will discuss topics like public art form preferences, potential locations for public art, public art outreach strategies and meet-and-greets for planners, S2P and the public.

Gorilla Art/Pop Up Outreach

“Pop-up” events are temporary ways to “activate” a public space (like a sidewalk or downtown square, or even a parking space). As a key feature of our public participation process, S2P proposes strategically planning the location and timing of events throughout North St. Paul to attract a high volume of passersby or nearby residents. These creative events attract attention and encourage interaction—for example, a table of free coffee or lemonade along with a ping pong table downtown may attract shoppers to stop and talk with the event organizers. The nature of these events can be very flexible and creative, and their design and operation should eventually be done by residents themselves. These temporary events will be used to advertise the participation process in general, reach a wide variety of people, encourage creative thinking and begin to empower residents to take ownership of the process itself. S2P will host these events in a variety of locations, including high-traffic areas and areas with underrepresented residents. Our goal is to recruit participants not only to provide feedback to city staff on the public art planning process, but also to create public art themselves through their participation, and to consider hosting similar events on their own with S2P’s support. By encouraging people to play, talk, make and think, these events start to foster a community of creative proaction.
Study circles are regular gatherings of committed residents to discuss issues of concern. Modeled after the successful format of study circles in Kuna, Idaho, these events will be held during the public art planning process but be encouraged to continue afterward. Study circles can be an effective way for residents to gather to discuss their vision for their community and for city staff to hear and respond to feedback.

Visual preference survey

A predesigned visual preference survey will be offered to North St. Paul residents online and at each of the events in this proposal. This survey will allow residents to engage in a less active or direct way with the process but still share their preferences for different forms of public art and how they can be located within a downtown context. The results of this survey will be made visible online and shared with participants at later events.

Meals and food at events

S2P recognizes that food is an important part of community. Food can also be a huge draw for residents to engage in public events, especially with busy schedules or for whom resources are scarce. Food is also a creative endeavor in and of itself, and creative food can encourage creative ideas. Foods with different "artistic theme" will be provided at public events, including "do it yourself food" ranging from "painted pancakes," to "pizza maps" (what are these, you ask?) Come to an S2P event to find out, S2P intends to invite local vendors to supply refreshments or ingredients whenever possible.

Story-sharing event/activity

Inspired by Storycorps in New York City, story-sharing events will be a part of S2P’s public participation process. Every person has experiences that make great stories, but sometimes they need spaces to allow them to share them. Sharing stories publicly helps build a sense of community between those listening and sharing, and helps community members enhance their understanding of their own neighbors. In addition, the stories shared by participants become the fabric of community that public art helps to express. These stories will be shared verbally and in written form through mobile storyboards brought to public events and pop-up events on 7th Street in downtown North St. Paul. Designed by local artists, these boards will both display the stories of others while allowing residents to record their own.

These stories will be focused on the history of public space and creative history of North St. Paul. While the stories themselves may not inform the Public Art plan, the process of engaging with residents in such an intimate way helps to build awareness of North St. Paul’s inherent creativity and identity and also inspires participants to engage with the planning process.
Website

Although North St. Paul residents may have a range of technical ability and internet access, a website is a crucial part of our participation plan. The website will post all past and future events, results from surveys and brainstorming, FAQs, forums, and feedback opportunities. S2P has dedicated staff to constantly update information and manage social media applications.

Online interaction is a helpful way for many residents to contribute their thoughts. An easily navigable website with a repository of information (both about the public art process and about North St. public art in general, including a public art inventory) provides an entry point for those curious in ongoing events and more dynamic interaction. A comment page would help capture the input of people too busy to attend meetings, and a digital version of the visual preference survey discussed above will be available.

Advertize through traditional outlets

Information about the public art planning and participation processes and related events like the Arts Fest will be shared with regional newspapers, local newsletters, churches, radio, and television. The process will be branded and consistent to be easily recognizable and help listeners, readers, and viewers identify the participation process by name and know about upcoming events.

Our goal is to recruit participants not only to provide feedback to city staff on the public art planning process, but also to create public art themselves through their participation, and to consider hosting similar events on their own with S2P’s support. By encouraging people to play, talk, make, and think, these events begin to foster a community of creative proaction.
**Work Program**

**PHASE I**
- March: Website Development, Arts-based Event Planning, Planning Team Meeting
- April: Program Advertising, Arts Fest, Team Identification
- May: Online Survey + Forum, Stakeholder Identification, Develop Scope of Participation
- June: "Guerilla" art events, Develop Plan Scope

**PHASE II**
- July: Arts Fest, Community Charrettes, Study Circles, "Guerilla" art events
- August: Develop Plan Scope, "Guerilla" art events, Stakeholder Identification, "Guerilla" art events
- September: Study Circles, School art program, Community Charrettes, Develop Plan Scope
- October: Plan Draft, Open Houses, Final Draft Plan

**PHASE III**
- March: Website Development, Arts-based Event Planning, Planning Team Meeting
- April: Program Advertising, Arts Fest, Team Identification
- May: Online Survey + Forum, Stakeholder Identification, Develop Scope of Participation
- June: "Guerilla" art events, Develop Plan Scope

**Schedule**
- March: City Staff, Residents
- April: Program Advertising, Arts-based Event Planning, Planning Team Meeting
- May: Online Survey + Forum, Stakeholder Identification, Develop Scope of Participation
- June: "Guerilla" art events, Develop Plan Scope
- July: Arts Fest, Community Charrettes, Study Circles, "Guerilla" art events
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**Arts-based Event Planning**
- Arts Fest
- "Guerilla" art events

**Website Development**
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- Arts-based Event Planning
- Planning Team Meeting
- Online Survey + Forum
- Stakeholder Identification
- Develop Scope of Participation
- "Guerilla" art events
- Study Circles
- Plan Draft
- Final Draft Plan

**Arts-based Event Planning**
- Arts Fest
- "Guerilla" art events
The Work Program explains how the planning and participation processes are organized into a coherent whole. A preliminary Work Program is to be used to advertise the Arts Fest and the Arts Plan, provide a forum for public input of individuals and organizations that expressed a particular interest in the Arts Plan at the Arts Fest hosted booths (the artistically inclined), and any additional residents who have already shown themselves to be proactive and organized, business leaders that helped organize the Arts Fest (they've already been contacted as potential team participants) and vision for the plan and participation process.

Phase I

The centerpiece of Phase I, as noted above, is the Arts Fest. If the event is held mid-summer, planning for the event should begin in the winter at the latest. Ample time should be given to those hoping to host a booth (the artistically inclined), and any additional residents who have already shown themselves to be proactive and organized, business leaders that helped organize the Arts Fest (they've already been contacted as potential team participants) and vision for the plan and participation process.

Next, the full-scale participation process begins. We have suggested a variety of events, which we believe would provide valuable guidance in developing the Public Arts Plan. However, these methods will depend on the participation scope developed by the team. The methods include school art, guerrilla art/booths, paint ‘n pancakes, church visits, study circles, traditional open houses, and an online survey and forum. Across the spectrum, meetings will be hosted by team members with the support of the community. The methods include direct outreach to regional artists.

Work Program

The Work Program would be organized into three phases. It will address the entire city in areas and at times with high foot traffic across the process. It provides an opportunity to reach out to those too busy to attend meetings as well as advertise future meetings. The more traditional events, like the open houses and study circles, afford residents opportunity to engage the arts plan more broadly and deeply. Each would include a presentation and input from the public. The input of the efforts noted above and all meetings and events Phase II would feed directly into the first plan draft. Finally, the website would be expanded to include a comment forum and a digital version of the visual preference survey.

The Work Program would also serve as a way to publish input of the visual preference survey. It will allow the website to be expanded to include a comment forum and a digital version of the visual preference survey. This would also serve as a way to advertise the plan to busy parents. Potentially, school art would be scheduled slightly earlier that other events to maximize this benefit. Guerrilla art booths would be organized to be held at the arts Fest (and other high foot traffic areas) to advertise the meeting.

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Phase I

The centerpiece of Phase I, as noted above, is the Arts Fest. The event would inform the website and serve as a way to publish input of the visual preference survey. It will allow the website to be expanded to include a comment forum and a digital version of the visual preference survey. This would also serve as a way to advertise the plan to busy parents. Potentially, school art would be scheduled slightly earlier that other events to maximize this benefit. Guerrilla art booths would be organized to be held at the arts Fest (and other high foot traffic areas) to advertise the meeting.

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The final aspect of Phase II is its iterative nature. It may be that the participation plan doesn't work as the team hoped. For this reason we have recommended a feedback loop between the scoping phase and the participation phase. This affords the team an opportunity to evaluate the success of their engagement program and make modifications where necessary. For example, if community members don't find the open houses helpful but they have been enjoying the guerilla art events, the leadership team of community members can dynamically adjust the participation scope accordingly. Community feedback can be collected informally through conversations or more formally through administration of the survey form provided in the appendices. The length of Phase II will depend greatly upon this feedback.

Phase III

The final phase is oriented towards development of the plan. The content of the Public Arts Plan will be built directly upon input provided from the team and the public during Phase II. This phase will begin with a plan draft produced by the consultant team. The drafted Plan will then be circulated at team meetings for comment before being introduced to the public through study circles and the website. Comments that surface through the team meetings, study circles and website will be cycled back through the plan drafting step. When a general consensus is produced by the consultant team, the plan will be released. The consultant team will be available for support.

Evaluation

There are two elements in the proposed process that are designed to facilitate internal evaluation. The first step is the iteration in Phase II between the scoping and public participation steps. If the participation efforts aren't working as planned, if people aren't attending, if there is general confusion, this iteration allows the team to regroup and consider improvement to the process. Existing events can be modified or new events can be developed through these iterations. The process is meant to be open and flexible. Even if the participation program is going well, it may be that residents have suggestions for even better events that could be considered and added in subsequent iteration. There don't have to be failures to warrant improving the process.

The second evaluation step is the feedback loop in Phase III between plan drafting and team meetings, study circles and website comments. If the plan didn't materialize as the community expected, this is the step where those problems can be identified and addressed.

There are many ways to effectively evaluate the success of the participation program. We have proposed as Evaluation Survey (see appendices) as just one way to gather valuable community input into the process. This survey would be administered at the end of a meeting or event and it would focus on participants' perceptions of the value of a particular event. This survey is not meant to replace the valuable experiences of event facilitators, but it provide a helpful supplement to their perspectives.

Recommendations: Communication and Documentation

The final element of the participation program that warrants special consideration is the manner in which information is communicated and how community input is documented. In terms of communication we have made a concerted effort to ensure the process is as broad and diverse as reasonably possible. The goal is both to reach a lot of participants as well as a diverse group of participants, including those typically underrepresented. In order to visually highlight the events/efforts that have a communicative component, we have noted them on the Workplan in the appendices. There are many ways to effectively evaluate the success of the participation program. We have proposed as Evaluation Survey (see appendices) as just one way to gather valuable community input into the process. This survey would be administered at the end of a meeting or event and it would focus on participants' perceptions of the value of a particular event. This survey is not meant to replace the valuable experiences of event facilitators, but it provide a helpful supplement to their perspectives.
References

Erickson, Ellsworth, arts council letter, January 17, 2008.


Intermedia Arts (http://www.intermediaarts.org/This-Is-Our-City)


Images from:

Photos of North St. Paul by Nancy Ferber


Art fest reference images from http://www.cityofeastlansing.com/Home/Main/Newcomers/PhotoGallery/

Documentation images http://www.walkthecompliancewalk.com/2010/12/20/what-is-adequate-documentation-for-workplace-investigations/

Survey images http://www.survey-reviews.net/index.php/tag/free-online-surveys/

Appendix 1

Sample Survey Form

Sample Participation/Comment Card/ Evaluation Form

Date of event: __/__/___

Type of event: (circle one) arts festival, study circle, pop-up event, other ____________

(Optional) Your name and best way to reach you if you would like someone to follow up ________________ & email, phone or address: ______________________

1. What did you like best about this event

2. What would you have change about future events like this?

3. Have you participated in other arts events in the City of North St. Paul?

4. What kind of art would you like to see more of in this community? Where would you like to see this?

5. Please rate the following: 1=not likely, 10=very likely
   a. I plan to participate in future public arts projects ____________
   b. I think the city has enough festivals and arts activities ____________
   c. I feel like my voice is heard at community meetings and events ________