

Creative CityMaking Minneapolis Update November 2015

The Creative CityMaking Minneapolis projects for 2015 have officially hit the ground running! The artist/City staff teams are working on a range of City projects in five separate City departments. The first two teams, working on Creative Asset Mapping and the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement, began their work in early spring 2015 and three more project teams, Digital Equity, Tenant Voices, and Electoral Engagement, joined the Creative CityMaking cohort in June. The artist/City staff teams have been busy building strong foundations for their cross sector collaboration by developing a shared understanding of their projects, taking time to examine some of the deeper shared values behind the work, and researching and prototyping project ideas.

What is the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement team up to?



Creative CityMaking Artist Aariah Fine with community members trying out the Equity Pulpit at FLOW, the Northside Arts Crawl in July.

Aariah Fine and D.A. Bullock, the artists in the team for the Blueprint for Equitable

Engagement project have been meeting with a range of community members and City officials to hear about their definition of the term "equity." Fine and Bullock are developing a series of short video segments to pilot using video as a public comment format (similar to letters and emails).

The team has also developed a mobile, artist designed engagement pulpit in collaboration with JXTA, a youth arts organization in north Minneapolis. The pulpit has made an appearance at several community events across Minneapolis this past summer to give the community a creative platform for speaking their minds. The concept is for all residents of Minneapolis to have a voice and a platform to share and shape what equity and the future of Minneapolis will look like.

The [Blueprint for Equitable Engagement](#) is a multi-year strategic action plan led by the City's Neighborhood and Community Relations department (NCR). The Blueprint is designed to ensure an equitable community engagement system for the City of Minneapolis; and to ensure the City's engagement efforts are equitable in their approach and implementation. An equitable engagement system ensures that all community voices are sought and valued, and that decision-makers reflect the communities they serve.

The artists are working collaboratively with NCR's Access and Outreach Team, which is dedicated to ensuring that equitable engagement practices are utilized wherever barriers exist due to language, disability, institutional practices and/or cultural norms.

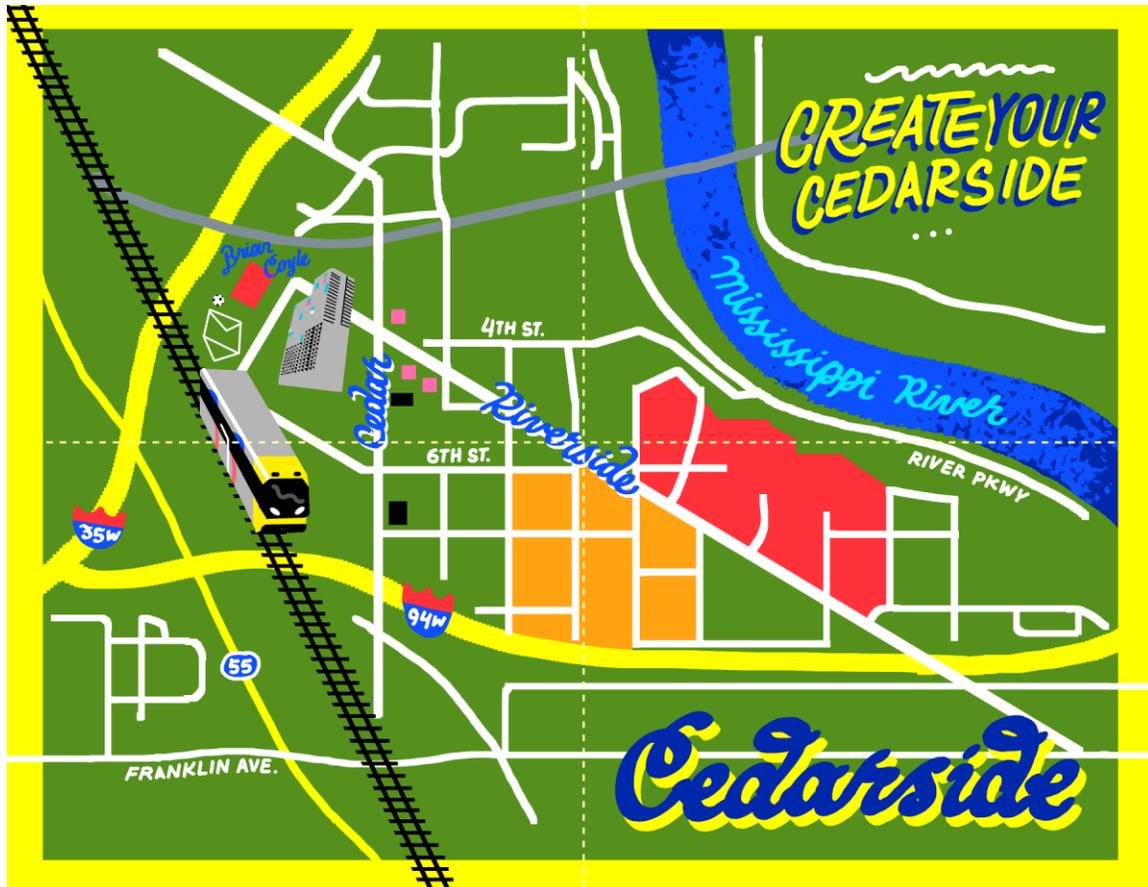
What is the Creative Asset Mapping project up to?

If you live, work, play or travel through the Cedar Riverside neighborhood, keep an eye out for Sha Cage and E.G. Bailey working on the Creative Asset Mapping project with city planner, Haila Maze. The team is exploring what the assets, strengths, and resources are that help people and groups in the Cedar Riverside area live their lives and thrive. Some of the questions the team is exploring are: How can the City and others provide opportunities for people to build on these assets and improve their lives? How are people connected to the city? How do these assets relate to other challenges and opportunities in this area? They recently launched the "Cedarside" campaign at the West Bank Community Coalition Block Party on September 12th. As part of the Cedarside campaign, the team developed a short video segment sharing

a new perspective of the neighborhood. The "We Are Cedarside" video can be seen [here](#).

The City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) – Long Range Planning Division has been engaged in an asset-mapping exercise, to shape a future vision for our city based on its strengths and intangible assets. This has involved collecting information about the elements that make up the city and give it character, from transit routes to trees. However, most of the information traditionally compiled is focused on the city's hard infrastructure and physical assets– such as roads, bridges, sidewalks, etc. While these elements are important to facilitating smooth transportation and connections, they do not touch on those intangible elements that are extremely important to people thriving in communities. Elements such as social networks, human resources, cultural events, and other aspects that are difficult to tabulate and map are key to a community's vitality and health. Without some way to measure these important community assets, we have an incomplete picture of all the city's assets. This is particularly true in the most disadvantaged communities, where residents may encounter barriers to opportunity and connectivity.

The artists are working with City department staff and consulting with Minneapolis communities such as Cedar Riverside. The artist team has developed an artful map template for the community to populate what is valued by the people who live, work, study, and play in the community. The team is using the map in tandem with a series of deep community conversations around what matters to the people of Cedar Riverside about their neighborhood.



Caption: The Cedarside campaign lifts up the Cedar Riverside neighborhood in its unique identity. The team developed a map for people to fill out identifying what they love about Cedarside.

What is the Tenant Voices project up to?

Did you know that over 50% of Minneapolis residents are renters? The artists working on the Tenant Voices project are working with City staff to help increase awareness on how tenant voices can be heard and engaged to inform operational and policy level decisions involving residential inspections.

The Tenant Voices team is exploring a multifaceted arts approach to inform systems change within a department and a city experiencing a swell of rental properties. Creative CityMaking artists, Mankwe Ndosu and Reggie Prim along with their City staff team members in Regulatory Services will:

- Gather and share tenant stories.
- Use arts-based interventions to affect culture change in the department.

- Link department staff directly to tenants through community-based art events.



Tenant Voices team members taking a close look at maps and data about Minneapolis.

What is the Electoral Engagement project up to?

Creative CityMaking artist, Jeremiah Bey, is working with the Office of the City Clerk through the Electoral Engagement project to initiate a dialogue between residents in the city of Minneapolis and the Office of the City Clerk to:

- Help residents better understand the current state of electoral functions in the City.
- Widen underrepresented peoples' understanding of what constitutes electoral engagement.
- Create clear pathways for residents to engage, participate, and advocate within the City.

Bey has been diving deeply into the past, present and future of electoral functions in the City, and will work with diverse community perspectives to develop a series of visual art pieces that convey the project goals around increasing access and

understanding of the electoral system in Minneapolis.



An illustration by Jeremiah Bey of Hubert Humphrey as he traces the history of electoral engagement in the region.

What is the Digital Equity project up to?

Digital equity is a component of equity in Minneapolis. The Information Technology (IT) department is working in collaboration with several organizations across Minneapolis to increase residents' access to computers and the Internet, and to increase technology skills within the community. Digital disparities currently exist around age, race, geography, and income. IT wants to better map and connect digital literacy skills to the technology assets in Minneapolis. IT considers the following among "community technology assets": public computer access locations, low cost Internet options, technology training, higher education and the new accelerated IT learning programs.

The Digital Equity artist team, Peter MacDonald and Kirk Washington, Jr. are working on a prototype creative community space in north Minneapolis that would increase access to technology and other creative tools.



The Digital Equity team on a site visit to the Harrison Neighborhood.