

Excerpt from the draft Creative City Road Map document –

THE ORIGIN STORY OF THE CREATIVE CITY ROAD MAP

In the summer of 2014, we set forth a mission to surface the present creative identity of Minneapolis and vision a future where all Minneapolitans can access and benefit from its creative economy. In order to engage and access everyone’s voice in this process, we realized that we needed to remain nimble and demonstrate our core values of equity through the way we did our work.

Early in the process, we talked with people involved in Minneapolis’ previous planning process, analyzed the 2005 Minneapolis Plan for Arts and Culture, and researched how other communities undergo cultural planning. Part of our evaluation involved comparing Minneapolis’ arts implementation work with our peer cities and learning what results had been achieved. We then collected data in the community and pulled from relevant media, research, and data, such as the Minneapolis Creative Index report. All of these data sources helped us write the *Creative City Road Map*.

[BOX HERE]

Since 2005 the City of Minneapolis has made some important investments in arts programming. For example, the 2005 Minneapolis Plan for Arts and Culture recommendations plan recommendations achieved include: establishing Public Art policies and a percent of art ordinance, building an artist in residence program (Creative City Making) which integrates the arts and artists into City Departments and the establishment of the Arts, Culture and Creative Economy program along with new a staff position.

In the spirit of holding racial justice at the forefront of the planning process, we worked on all fronts to include diverse perspectives in the planning process. We worked with community artists and focused our engagement in communities that weren’t responding to online survey methods. We hired creative workers from a diversity of our communities and cultures to document our events, design our graphics, cater our large group meetings, provide creative summaries of information and create a welcoming atmosphere at our Community Open House events. We included more perspectives in the form of ‘Data Jams’ when making sense of the information we collected during our engagement efforts.

Over an 18-month whirlwind, we engaged thousands of people in the planning process. Below are a few ways people participated and made their voices heard:

Committees

Two committees met throughout the planning process, offering valuable guidance and feedback. **The Steering Committee** provided high-level guidance throughout the process and was composed of elected officials, City staff, system partners, community leaders in the arts, and Minneapolis Arts Commission members. The **Work Group** was a larger group of stakeholders from the City, system partners, and creative organizations, as well and individual artists with

relevant experience in the fields of placemaking, creative engagement, arts and the economy, creative lifelong learning and sharing, and artist support. Originally convening separately around the five fields, the work groups met collectively three times in 2015 at cultural venues throughout the City; local musicians, spoken word artists, and chefs brought these spaces to life and inspired work group members.

Gathering information and engaging community

We gathered information from the community from September to February in a variety of ways. We did the usual -- survey and open houses -- but we also infused our outreach with creativity. Two Artist Engagement Teams creatively engaged underrepresented and underserved communities. Through these engagements, the Artist Engagement Teams built support for the planning process, collected information that informed the *Creative City Road Map* and then designed a system to loop back and share with communities what we heard and gather their feedback. As people started filling out our online survey, we could tell whose voices were missing. The Artist Engagement Teams then focused on building relationships and collecting information from specific communities.

Making sense of the information gathered

Voices for Racial Justice: The Staff Team and Artist Engagement Teams worked with Voices for Racial Justice, a local community organization working to advance racial, cultural, social, and economic justice, to learn how to infuse racial equity into data analysis.

Data Jams: As a starting point in the data analysis process, work group members and Artist Engagement Teams were invited to Data Jams, where they “coded” qualitative data, looking for patterns and then identifying prominent themes. These Data Jams served to bring more perspectives to data analysis, embracing multiple narratives in the data and creating space for those involved at all levels of the planning process to bring their expertise to the analysis. The themes identified through the Data Jams were used by the Staff Team to code the rest of the qualitative data.

Engagement tools

Survey: developed from the plan questions to gather information from arts interested audiences and creative practitioners. The survey was available from Sept. 2014-Feb., 2015, both online and in paper form; the survey was translated into Spanish and Somali.

Artist Engagement Team out on the streets, in the community

The Artist Engagement Teams were core to the success of the planning process. There were two artist engagement teams who participated in the development of our core research ideas, survey questions, and who created unique activities and piggy backed on community events already planned. The artists involved in the *Creative City Road Map* were hired because of their community expertise, experience and abilities to connect to diverse communities across the city. For over six months, they collected information using surveys, interviews, and “what is your creative Minneapolis?” cards.

- **Unique events** included performances, food, and dancing at Honey, and Hip Hop Caroling at the Brian Coyle Center.

- **Piggybacking on events** that were already going on in the community at such venues at Café Southside, Lowery Open Streets, Intermedia Arts, and the Minneapolis American Indian Center.
- **“What is your creative Minneapolis?” cards:** developed to capture personal stories, feelings and perspectives on multiple creative realities in Minneapolis distributed at events and left at key public places around Minneapolis.
- **Community mural:** a large, mobile mural, the Artist Engagement Teams captured personal feelings and images of a creative Minneapolis.
- **Interviews:** the Artist Engagement Teams gathered data through conversations with community members.

[PULL QUOTE]

“For Open Streets Lowry, it was just amazing to be in wide open space on such a beautiful day with such a great turn out of families, kids, and community members. There was a good amount of curiosity about the Creative Minneapolis campaign and a number of people who were willing to stop and talk art ideas, outreach, and accessibility. This was affirming. It felt good to meet the people where they live!” – *Sha Cage, Creative City Road Map Artist Engagement Team Member on Open Streets*

[PULL QUOTE]

“It turned out to be *THE* highlight of all our engagements.... The best part of the night was about 50 people (mostly youth) outside with music playing and a 7 year old girl singing into the microphone followed by a teenage Somali male rapping about cultural identity and community. Everyone kept saying ‘more of these’ — more events like this!’” – *Sha Cage, Creative City Road Map Artist Engagement Team Member on Hip Hop Caroling*

Open Houses: the general public, arts interested audiences and creative practitioners, workgroups, and Steering Committee members were invited to three open houses. The purpose of the open houses in 2014 was to describe the planning process and topic areas, gather input through the survey, and spark excitement for the process. In Sept., 2015, the open house event served as a venue to review the draft *Creative City Road Map*. Included in this open house was an exhibition designed by graphic artist, Ashley Fairbanks, with key parts of the draft Road Map, and projects by the Artist Engagement Teams that visually showed the planning process to date.

Meeting with arts organizations, systems partners, and community organizations: a large meeting including organizations and system partners that serve or work with creative practitioners and produce creative products, programs and events was convened in summer 2015. Participants discussed activity in their organizations and how it relates to the *Creative City Road Map* goals and objectives. Over 100 people attended from 70 organizations at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Social Media: E-updates, blogging and other social media outlets were used regularly throughout the process not only to invite people to engage in the planning process online and at events, but also to report back throughout the process to stakeholders. On a monthly basis, we

sent out electronic newsletters explaining key stages in the planning process and providing updates on how people could get involved.

Creatively sharing qualitative data: For the spring work group meeting that involved sharing the data and analysis, local performance artist, A Comeaux was commissioned to create two pieces using qualitative answers to survey questions: “what is your favorite place in Minneapolis and why?” and “in what ways can the City of Minneapolis help you advance your artistic, design or creative practice?” Through her performances, A Comeaux vibrantly brought the data to life, providing a creative way for work group members to be immersed in the data. View one of [A Comeaux’s pieces from May 14 here](#).

DRAFT

Who we reached

Surveys were completed by residents from across Minneapolis. Because we used diverse engagement methods, we heard from people living across the city. The Artist Engagement Teams gathered information in areas such as Cedar Riverside, Central and Near North, communities we weren't hearing from through the online survey (Figure 1)

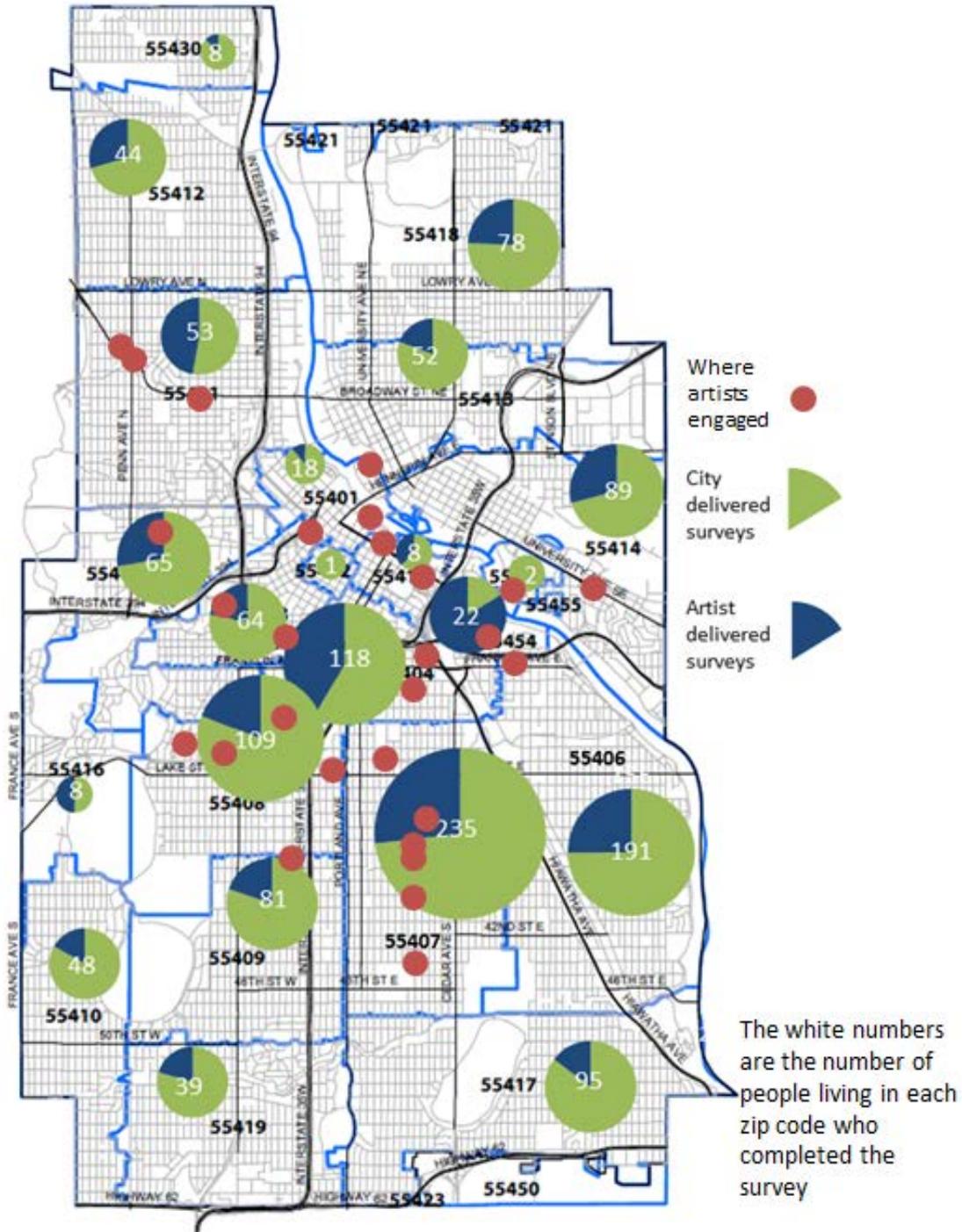


Figure 1

Nearly 40% of the artist-delivered surveys were filled out by people under 24 years old compared to only 8% of the people who filled out the survey online (Figure 2).

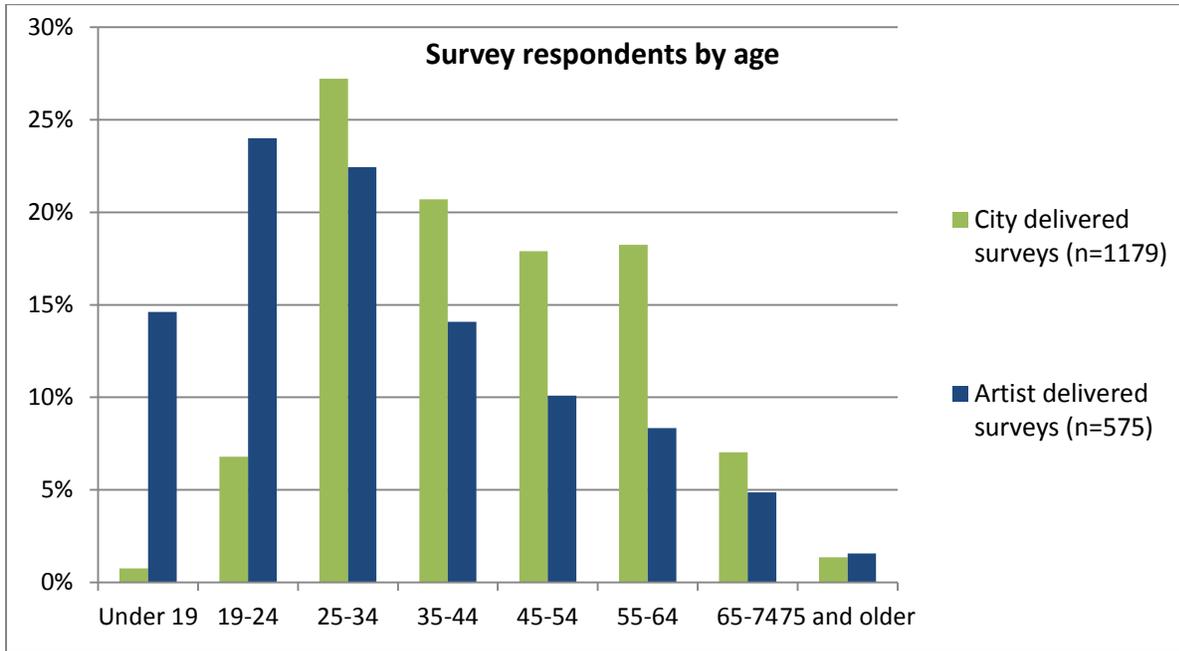


Figure 2

The majority of people who filled out artist delivered surveys were people of color; of the people who filled out the survey online, only 15% were people of color (Figure 3). The Artist Engagement Teams successfully reached populations and communities that were not engaging online.

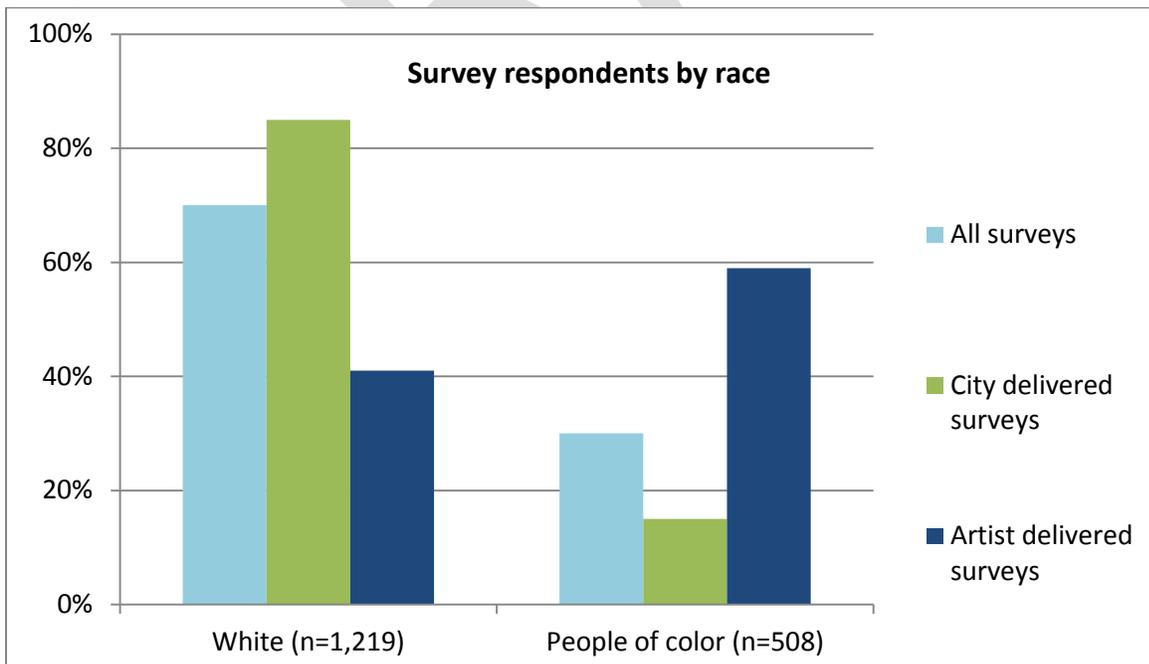


Figure 3

Public comment period

After completing the draft Road Map document, it was important that we reported back to the people engaged during the data collection phase of the planning process to share what we did with the information we heard. We asked for feedback using four questions:

- What excites you?
- What would you like to see changed?
- What bright ideas do you have for how to move this vision forward?
- What questions do you have?

We collected feedback to these questions in the following ways:

- **Traveling exhibition:** Graphic artist, Ashley Fairbanks, designed a traveling exhibit with key information from the draft *Road Map*. The exhibition traveled to four locations targeted to reach underserved communities throughout Minneapolis. Each location hosted the exhibition for one week.
- **Loop backs:** The Artist Engagement Team developed creative ways to share the draft plan through public *Loop Back* events. These events, occurring at three of the four locations where the traveling exhibition was hosted, included performances by Minnesota Congressman Keith Ellison and members of Redbone, a group of Native drummers, conversation circles, a radio show and opportunities to provide feedback on the draft Road Map document.
- **Online feedback:** The content in the traveling exhibition designed by Ashley Fairbanks, as well as the draft Road Map was available online.