



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of

Date: February 10, 2011

To: Councilmember Lisa Goodman, Chair, Community Development Committee

Subject: National Endowment for the Arts *Our Town* initiative

Recommendation: Approve the recommendation made by a City of Minneapolis internal review team to support submitting a Statement of Interest to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) *Our Town* initiative for "Setting the Stage for the Hennepin Avenue Cultural Corridor."

Department Information

Prepared by: Jenny Chayabutr, IGR-Grants & Special Projects

Approved by: Steven Bosacker, City Coordinator

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Steven Bosacker'.

Presenters in Committee: Jenny Chayabutr, IGR-Grants & Special Projects

Financial Impact

- No financial impact

Supporting Information

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) *Our Town* initiative

In January 2011 the National Endowment for Arts (NEA) announced a new initiative, *Our Town*. From the NEA guidelines – '*Our Town* will invest in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, are looking to increase their livability...'

All *Our Town* applications must involve at least two organizations: one a nonprofit design or cultural organization, and one a government entity. **Each local government, whether applying directly or as part of a partnership with some other lead organization, is limited to one (1) application.**

According to the NEA guidelines *Our Town* will invest in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, are looking to increase their livability, and specifically are seeking to:

- Improve their quality of life.
- Encourage creative activity.
- Create community identity and a sense of place.
- Revitalize local economies.

City of Minneapolis Process

The City Coordinator's office took responsibility for coordinating the following process to determine which project the City will endorse. Listed below is a timeline showing the steps in the City's process; including the announcement from the NEA and the NEA application deadline.

January 13 – NEA Announcement posted on grants.gov
February 7 – Proposals due to the City of Minneapolis for internal review
February 8 and 9 – Internal review of proposals
February 10 – Internal review team met to discuss proposals
February 15 – City Council Community Development Review Committee
February 25 – City Council meeting
March 1 – NEA Statement of Interest Deadline
March 25 – NEA Invitation to Apply Issued
April 25 – NEA Formal Application Deadline

Information about the City's process was sent to the Minneapolis City Council, Mayor R.T. Rybak, City of Minneapolis Department Heads, the Minneapolis Arts Commission, the Arts and Cultural Policy Study Group (aka "Ann Markusen's group"), and a list of arts and cultural organizations (maintained by the CPED-Planning division).

Proposals

The City of Minneapolis received five (5) proposals.

Grand Opening and Inaugural Season of the Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts:

Artspace would request \$250,000 toward an approximately \$1 million program budget for the Grand Opening and Inaugural Season of the Cowles Center; September 2011 – June 2012.

John Biggers Seed Project:

The City of Minneapolis, in partnership with the Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center (CAFAC) and Obsidian Arts, would request \$200,000 as part of a \$409,300 budget for the Biggers Seed Project, a public art installation inspired by the *Celebration of Life Mural*. The chosen site is a highly visible, 110-foot bridge spanning I94 at Highway 55, adjacent to the Mural's original location and connecting the residential North Side with downtown, light rail stations and new Twins Ballpark.

The damaged chain link will be replaced with an 8' high public art railing incorporating colorful enameled steel and imagery influenced by Biggers artwork and North Minneapolis history. Enameling was selected for its creative potential and durability.

Seed will continue to nurture emerging artists and others through a 10-session course on African-American art history, public art, civic engagement, and enameling. Working collaboratively with the lead artists and CAFAC they will refine design, build the enameling kiln and create the steel panels.

Minnesota's Gathering Place – Connecting the Dots:

Citizens for a Loring Park Community would request \$200,000 as part of a \$400,000 budget to design and implement transformative placemaking and connectivity improvements for residents and visitors to key corridors through the Loring Park Neighborhood. This includes landscape architecture design development and engineering feasibility studies for key short-range and mid-range elements of the Neighborhood Master Plan.

Setting the Stage for the Hennepin Avenue Cultural Corridor

Hennepin Theatre Trust would request \$200,000 as part of a \$400,000 budget to work with arts, business, philanthropy, education, religious and public sectors, to formulate a plan to re-invent Hennepin Avenue (from the Mississippi Riverfront to the Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Sculpture Garden), converting underdeveloped spaces along the Avenue to uses that inspire an arts-centered community cultural experience which promotes economic vitality.

Gateway/Campus project

The City of Minneapolis, in partnership with Edison Community & Sports Foundation, would request \$25,000 for the Gateway/Campus project.

The Gateway/Campus project would encompass a roughly seven-block area, to include the Northeast Library, Jackson Square Park, the Flood Mitigation Basin, Edison School and the Edison School athletic fields and gym. It would create a placemaking design plan that would build on the initial investment and guide the re-imagining of this pivotal area as a public community gathering space, a much-needed eastern gateway and anchor point for the Northeast Arts District, and a Main Street thoroughfare connecting the Northeast community to the river.

The project budget would support design fees for a master design plan for the project area; public engagement events to solicit community input; public arts events that would serve to inform discussion, design and goals.

Review Process and Recommendation

An internal review team made up of the following representatives reviewed and scored the proposals according to the NEA criteria.

Mayor's Office: Erica Prosser
City Council: Andrea Jenkins
City Council: Doug Kress
CPED: Chuck Lutz
Coordinator: Jenny Chayabutr

Zoe Thiel of the City Coordinator's office also contributed to the review team. She organized the NEA guidelines and criteria for the review committee and provided valuable input based on well-researched information from the NEA guidelines. While she did not participate as a "reviewer" the review committee feels that it is important to recognize her contribution to the process, which allowed for a review that was both efficient and effective.

The NEA review categories included –

Partnership: All applications must involve at least two organizations: one a nonprofit design or cultural organization, and one a government entity.

Match: All applications must have at least a 1:1 match. The match can be all in-kind, but the NEA would prefer to see a monetary component. Federal sources of funds can not be used for the match.

Organizational appropriateness: Appropriateness of the project to the organization's mission.

Documentation: As appropriate, plans for documentation, evaluation, and dissemination of the project results.

Merit: Potential of the project to achieve results consistent with the NEA outcome for
Livability: Strengthening communities through the arts.

Ability: Appropriateness of the budget, time period, goals, and qualifications.

Artistic excellence: Quality of the artists, design professionals, arts organizations, works of art, or services that the project will involve, as appropriate.

Community: Appropriateness of the project to the distinct character and qualities of the community, extent to which the project engages the public in planning for and participating in the project, and where appropriate, potential to reach underserved populations.

The complete NEA guidelines are attached.

The proposals were reviewed and received the following scores.

Project	Lead Organization	Partner Organization	Proposed NEA Amount	Total Budget	Total (max. 100)
Grand Opening and Inaugural Season of the Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts	Artspace on behalf of the Cowles Center for Dance and Performing Arts	City of Minneapolis	\$250,000	\$1,000,000 (approx.)	66
John Biggers Seed Project	City of Minneapolis	Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center and Obsidian Arts	\$200,000	\$409,300	66
Minnesota's Gathering Place – Connecting the Dots	Citizens for a Loring Park Community	City of Minneapolis	\$200,000	\$400,000	46
Setting the Stage for the Hennepin Avenue Cultural Corridor	Hennepin Theatre Trust	City of Minneapolis	\$200,000	\$400,000	84
Gateway/Campus project	City of Minneapolis	Edison Community & Sports Foundation	\$25,000	\$50,000	53

The internal review team discussed all proposals and recommended "Setting the Stage for the Hennepin Avenue Cultural Corridor" for City of Minneapolis endorsement for a proposal to the NEA. Of the five (5) proposals received this project received the highest review score and appears to be the best fit with the NEA guidelines.

Additional information

Attached: NEA *Our Town* guidelines