Art in the Acre RFQ
Artist Info Session
July 6, 2023
Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- About TDI and the Placemaking Initiative (nate)
- About Mosaic Lowell Upcoming Arts Opportunities (jess o)
- What is Placemaking? (jess f)
- Acre Story & Visual Language
- Process & Timeline
- Sample Art/Placemaking Applications
- Sample Locations
- Q & A
Hello and Welcome!
TDI Placemaking Initiative Community Partners

- City of Lowell
- Mosaic Lowell
- ArtUp Lowell
- Coalition for a Better Acre
- UMass Lowell
- Greater Lowell Community Foundation
- Latinx Community Center for Empowerment
- Lowell Housing Authority

consultant:
Transformative Development Initiative
Building a Culture of Co-investment in Small Cities
What is TDI?

Our Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) is a program for Gateway Cities designed to accelerate economic growth within focused districts.
The program is working with each TDI Partnership to build a local culture of co-investment.
Gateway Cities (26)

Gateway Cities are legally defined as cities with:
- Population between 35,000 and 250,000
- Median household income below the state median
- A lower percentage than the state average of adults with a college degree
TDI DISTRICTS

TDI concentrates economic development activities, resources, and investments within designated neighborhood areas, known as “TDI Districts.” TDI Districts are mixed-use with a commercial component, compact—with a five-minute walking radius or less—and are defined by a walkable, dense physical environment.
“The TDI District, the initiatives, really allow the community to test something out in a very small scale, short timeline and then expand once they figure out what are the things that are working. So, you see an impact in a shorter amount of time and then you can divert resources one way or another depending on what’s working. I think that’s crucial for the long-term growth of a community.”

- Pedro Soto, Planning Director, City of Lawrence
Local Partnership + TDI Fellow

TDI Fellows facilitate partnership workplanning in which local actors decide how to deploy the TDI toolkit — a set of resources made available to participating neighborhoods.

@my_tdi
What are we doing in the Acre?

Supporting local businesses!

TDI Local is a competitive program that supports local market development. TDI awards "block grants" to partnerships who **redistribute funds locally** to support small business improvement, foster community and property owner engagement, and improve the public realm.
What are we doing in the Acre?

Supporting pedestrian spaces!

The TDI Equity program is a competitive opportunity available only to properties within TDI Districts.

Through this program, MassDevelopment can issue grants or loans to fill funding gaps in catalytic real estate projects—those kinds of projects that will benefit the broader community and improve the look and feel of the district.
What are we trying to do in the Acre?

Support local creatives design their own neighborhood
Mosaic Lowell

An Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Plan for All of Lowell

Supporting Arts and culture through 3 fundamental objectives:

- Equity building
- Youth development
- Economic development

MosaicLowell.org
Local Opportunities and Resources

City of Lowell ARPA Public Art funding

- Due by August 25
- Individuals, non-profits, and for-profits can apply
- Detailed rendering is not required upon application
- Separate Permit application will also be required
- Rendering will be due upon permit application

https://www.lowellma.gov/1616/Cultural-Sector-ARPA-Grant-Programs

Now and There Boston - Public art opportunities

- https://www.nowandthere.org/
- The Accelerator Cohort Application is due July 31!

Massachusetts Cultural Council

- https://massculturalcouncil.org/artists-art/
Americans for the Arts - Public Art resource Center

- Toolkits, opportunities and detailed information on best practices
- Americans for the Arts Public Art Network Statement:

“PAN does not recommend issuing an RFP in which artists are asked to produce drawings/ideas based on limited information. Creating ideas is the ‘currency’ of artists, giving away ideas for free is not fiscally responsible.”

- Publicartist.org
  - Signing up is free, database of national open calls

- CallForEntry.org
  - Signing up is free, database of national open calls

- Visit cultural council websites of individual cities and towns
  - Cambridge, Boston Somerville, etc.
Considerations for Public Art Proposals

Is it an open call?
- Follow application instructions!
- If it outlines a theme, customize the project to fit.
- If it feels like too much of a stretch for your artistic style, consider if it is worth the time to apply.

Is it feasible?
- Calculate your supply costs and estimated time required
- When a call proposes a stipend that is meant to include materials, can you afford to pay yourself a fair wage?

Are your proposed materials appropriate for the project?
- Consider if it is a temporary or permanent installation
- Will it be able to withstand weather conditions?

Will any specialized equipment be required?
- A lift or concrete barriers for protection will incur additional costs

Rights and ownership of the imagery
- Agree on use of images and promotion.
Considerations for Public Art Proposals

Have a location in mind?
- Have a conversation with the building owner
- Apply for a permit through the City of Lowell’s Cultural Affairs Office: https://www.lowellma.gov/446/Cultural-Affairs-Special-Events

Is your proposed location within Lowell’s historic district?
- There are additional limitations in these areas.
- Additional approval will be needed by the City of Lowell historic board, they meet 1x/month so you need to consider this in your project timeline.

Will insurance be required?
- Insurance is generally a requirement for liability to cover any injuries during installation
- Talk to an insurance broker about liability/event insurance details and costs
- Projects within the City of Lowell will require proof of insurance
- A private property owner may be able to cover the project under their insurance, so have this conversation with them

Who is maintaining the work?
- Does the property owner or project organizer have a budget for maintenance?
- The City of Lowell does have a fund for city-owned public art projects on public property. Anything on private property will not be covered by this fund.

TDI and Mosaic will be assisting with all of these logistics for the Art in the Acre project!
What is Placemaking?

Placemaking is a participatory process for shaping public space that harnesses the ideas and assets of the people who use it. Our approach is inclusive and multi-disciplinary:

- Authentic storytelling
- Memorable landmarks
- Community-centered
- Participatory + inclusive
- Builds ownership + connection
- Scalable + cumulative
Project for Public Spaces has developed a robust methodology for Placemaking.

Learn more at: www.pps.org
The Acre Placemaking Initiative: Goals

- Develop a community-based brand story and placemaking framework for The Acre District in Lowell
- Provide guidelines to integrate art into new and existing infrastructure
- Foster a unified vision for art and placemaking that can be used by multiple stakeholders over many years
- Highlight the stories and culture of The Acre’s residents
- Improve perception and increase excitement about this neighborhood
Art in the Acre: Placemaking Criteria

- HONOR the past and present
- IMPROVE existing perception
- BUILD on community pride
- REPRESENT multilingual population
- MAKE functional artwork an interactive element of urban streets
- RENEW the district for a bright future
- CREATE a positive perception of The Acre
- CONNECT the district to Lowell at large
- CELEBRATE diversity of culture
- ENERGIZE community with color and light
The Acre Story: History

The Acre was originally established as a place for immigrant workers building the canals, which powered the textile mills Lowell is known for. It continues to be a landing pad for those from other countries.
The Acre Story: Today

The Acre is Lowell’s most colorful neighborhood – the vibrant heartbeat of the City. Experience the energy of this diverse community with music and food from every corner of the world. People who call The Acre home are connected by a sense of pride, strength, and resiliency.
The Acre Story: Key Words & Themes

- Energy
- Color
- Community
- Abundance
- Diversity
- Grit
Art in the Acre: Visual Language

Movement, Colorful, Energetic, Texture, Bold, Warm
Art in the Acre: Visual Language

THE ACRE
THE ACRE
THE ACRE
THE ACRE

“A”
Arrow directions
Overlap
Translucent
Convergence
Culture

< >
Art in the Acre: Visual Language Exploration

“Å”
Arrow directions
Overlap
Translucent
Convergence
Culture
Sample Art/Placemaking Projects

- Street/sidewalk or other Murals
- Fence Art
- Bridge Installation
- Sculpture
- Printed Graphics/Photography
- Mosaic Art
- Furniture/Structures/ Parklets
- Poetry Installations
- Sculpture/Art on Loan
- Lighting/Technology-based Art
Art in The Acre RFQ Process

- Apply for one of 5 – 10 pilot art opportunities
- Budgets of $1,000 – 5,000 each
- Fill out the form at: bit.ly/AcreArt
- Apply before midnight on Sunday, July 23 to be considered
- Finalists contacted by 8/16
- Site-specific proposals due by ****
- Art Installed by September 30th
Sample Art/Placemaking Projects: Small
Sample Art/Placemaking Projects: Medium
Sample Art/Placemaking Projects: Large (future)
Sample Art/Placemaking Locations: Benches
Sample Art/Placemaking Locations: Bridges
Sample Art/Placemaking Locations: Fences/Canopies
Sample Art/Placemaking Locations: Empty Properties
Q & A from in-person session:

Q: Do projects need to stay within the Acre district?

A: It is best to propose a project within the TDI District in the Acre (Upper Merrimack St), but if a portion of it extends beyond the border that will be ok

Q: What is the process for this project?

A:

1. Fill out the quick, online RFQ form to express interest.
2. Interested artists will be categorized by medium and experience.
3. The Acre Art & Placemaking Group (Community Partners with MassDevelopment TDI Program and Selbert Perkins Design) will select 10-15 finalists to consider as project leads by end of July.
4. Finalists will be assigned a location and provided a stipend of $250 to create a detailed budget and rendering of their proposed artwork by August 16.
5. Proposals will be accepted or modified with all artists (including assistants) to be released by August 30.
6. Artwork is expected to be created and installed in September, 2023.
7. A celebration event and tour will be planned for October.
Thank you!

We look forward to seeing your work.

Questions?

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