

Applicant (GMS): Opa-locka Community Development Corporation, Inc., Opa-locka, FL

Project: Opa-locka Community Development Corporation, INC

a) Budget. Opa-locka Community Development Corporation (OLCDC) is requesting \$250,000, to be matched by \$250,000 in partner contributions for a total project budget of \$500,000. Please see Attachment 8 – Optional Project Budget for details.

b) Major project activities. The Magnolia North neighborhood of decades past was riddled with vagrancy and dilapidation. In the 1980s, crime mitigation efforts involved erecting permanent barricades across all but 2 streets leading into the neighborhood. Today several barricades still stand as emblems of the neighborhood's past – eyesores that isolate the neighborhood and perpetuate a negative image. Yet extensive revitalization activities are underway in Magnolia North, including a 2-year, \$19.6 million foreclosure mitigation initiative currently being implemented with federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding by OLCDC in Magnolia North and adjacent areas. In 2010, this initiative spurred a collaborative strategic planning process, Vision 20/20, led by OLCDC, which yielded plans for creation of arts-based public spaces to help revitalize and sustain Magnolia North.

The Community Gateways project will implement this plan by creating 6 redesigned, unique, inviting public spaces at 4 intersections where barricades still stand, and at 2 additional intersections that are critical and entry points and public crossroads of the neighborhood. The 6 “gateways” will be collaboratively designed by artists, architects, urban designers, and the community. The goal is for public art to serve not as stand-alone fixtures in space, but as an integral element of the public realm. We see paving, planters, lighting, seating, landscaping, and building features all as potential “canvasses” for art that enlivens the 6 Gateways and adds aesthetic value and a heightened sense of community to affordable housing that are being built adjacent to the Gateway sites and throughout the neighborhood. Additionally, this project aims to not only engage the community in the design of the Gateways, but also to use this process to launch a long-term public arts initiative in Opa-locka that will increase access to and involvement with the arts for residents and visitors for years to come. To this end, the team includes experts in arts education who will engage residents in the collaborative design process for the Community Gateways, and in future public arts programming.

Phase 0 (*This phase is not intended to receive Our Town grant funds*): Due to the time-sensitive nature of federally-funded housing development activities in Magnolia North, this project has continued to move

forward since the last Our Town application round. In April, 2011, the team issued a national call to artists to solicit qualifications for the Community Gateways artworks. From the responses, 5-7 finalists will be invited to spend one day in Opa-locka (May, 2011) to receive an orientation to the project sites and the community. They will then develop site-specific artwork proposals.

Phase I (*Proposed start of Our Town grant period*): Artists' site-specific proposals evaluated and up to 6 artists selected to join the project team (as many as one artist per project site, though fewer artists may also be selected).

Phase II: Outreach to the community to invite stakeholders to a community workshop. Arts education professionals from the Savannah College of Art and Design will perform special outreach to children through area schools. A daylong community design workshop in Opa-locka will bring together artists, area manufacturing and fabrication professionals, other design team members, and the community. Participants will collaborate on a design strategy for each Gateway. Based on workshop outcomes, artists and designers will develop final designs. Artworks shall then be fully integrated into the design of public space.

Phase III: Barricades removed, public realm designs and integrated art works constructed/installed. All phases will be photo documented to use as teaching tools in city schools and in promotional materials for the new Opa-locka as framed in Vision 20/20.

Anticipated impact: The Community Gateways project will help to "reopen" the Magnolia North neighborhood to the surrounding community by creating an inviting "front door" to the neighborhood, and pedestrian-oriented destinations in a largely auto-oriented community. These places of well-used, well-maintained high-quality design will help to establish the neighborhood's image as a desirable, amenity-rich "neighborhood of choice." The Gateways will also improve livability for current and the anticipated 200 new residents by creating public spaces where neighbors can meet, children can play safely, seniors can congregate, and visitors can experience unique public art and civic culture. Moreover, the extensive community involvement in the project will create a sense of ownership, belonging, and pride in these new spaces. The project will be a model for the seamless integration of architecture, urban design, and art, and for communities wishing to utilize design and art to revitalize underutilized small public places.

c) Outcomes and measurements. Outcomes will be measured by community survey. Before Phase I, a questionnaire will be mailed to Magnolia North and adjacent neighborhood residents. It will ask respondents to rate how frequently they use local public spaces; how frequently they walk to a

neighborhood destination; how frequently they engage in arts-oriented activities; and their sense of safety and the quality of their experience as a pedestrian and resident. Upon project completion, the survey will be repeated. We expect results to show increases in: walking to local destinations, use of public spaces, feelings of safety, and frequency of engagement with the arts.

d) Schedule. Phase 0: 4-7/2011. Phase I: 7-8/2011. Phase II: 9/2011-1/2012. Phase III: 1-7/2012.

e) Partners, roles & past involvement. (* Indicates commitment to project.)

***Opa-locka Community Development Corporation (OLCDC)** will coordinate all project partners and ensure seamless integration of this project with other neighborhood revitalization activities. OLCDC is currently undertaking several redevelopment initiatives in the Magnolia North neighborhood, including: extensive housing and commercial development; commissioning design guidelines for new development; site planning/urban design for key development sites including the Community Gateways project sites; and marketing and sales of new revitalized affordable homes and homebuyer counseling services.

***City of Opa-locka, Florida** (required government partner) will provide land, public rights-of way, public services, and other public resources to support the project, and will facilitate permitting processes. The City has committed land and public rights of way for the development of the Community Gateways sites, and has instituted an expedited permitting process for designated projects within Magnolia North. City officials participated in the Vision 20/20 strategic planning process that led to the conception of the Community Gateways project, and have been enthusiastic supporters of the implementation process for the Vision 20/20 Framework Plan and the Community Gateways Project.

***Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)**'s Department of Professional Education, (required nonprofit design/cultural partner) will lend expertise in Arts Education to facilitate outreach and engagement activities aimed at the local community, and particularly school-aged youth and their families, to encourage community participation in the Community Gateways design process. This engagement will serve as the jumping-off point for a long-term partnership between SCAD and OLCDC to provide ongoing opportunities for public involvement in the arts in Opa-locka (not funded by this grant). SCAD is an arts college based in Savannah, GA nationally known for its high-caliber fine arts faculty and its role in sparking urban revitalization through arts-based initiatives.

***The Art in Public Places (APP) program of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs** is currently administering a competition to identify artists for the Community Gateways

project, and has committed to subsequently overseeing the selection and commissioning of artists. APP will also facilitate the process of artists engaging with the community and with members of the project team (including architects and site designers) to develop community-driven designs for the Community Gateways, and construction and installation of the final works of art.

***Stull & Lee Architects** will provide architectural, urban planning, and site design for the six Community Gateways sites, in collaboration with the selected artists and other members of this team. Stull & Lee has produced conceptual drawings and renderings for the Community Gateways sites that will assist residents and artists to visualize the spaces without the current barricades so they can consider the potential challenges and possibilities of the redesigned space. Additionally, Stull & Lee has developed design guidelines for new development in Magnolia North. Stull & Lee has been extensively involved in visioning, planning, and design work for improvement projects in Magnolia North since 2010, and was a key participant in the Vision 20/20 planning process that was the genesis of the Community Gateways project.

***Design2Form** will provide construction administration and project management services to coordinate construction projects that are happening simultaneous with this project with the installation of artworks and public space improvements. Design2Form has provided architectural design and construction administration services for several years for OLCDC's residential and commercial development projects in and around Magnolia North, and was a key participant in the Vision 20/20 planning process.

Up to 6 artists will be selected by competition to implement public art for each of the 6 project sites. Applicants will respond to a national call to artists which was issued by APP in April, 2011. Artists will be evaluated by arts professionals drawn from the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs Professional Advisory Committee – a national panel of professionals in the arts. Primary criteria for finalist selection will be previous artistic accomplishment as demonstrated in past work, public art experience, and/or approach to the project as demonstrated in the preliminary statement. Finalists will be invited to develop proposals which will be evaluated by a professional panel and local residents and stakeholders.

f) Target community. The target community includes existing residents of Magnolia North and surrounding neighborhoods, including expected future residents. According to the American Community Survey, the community is predominantly African American (67%) and Hispanic (35%). 31% of residents

are foreign-born and 39% speak a language other than English at home. 31% live below the Federal poverty level. Residents must currently travel well outside of Opa-locka to experience most forms of art or cultural activities including public art. Community members will be invited to workshops with the project team to help shape the public art. Youth will be engaged through schools by arts education professionals from SCAD. OLCDC will utilize flyers, email, and local community institutions (e.g. churches) – the same channels that OLCDC uses to advertise our financial education, available homes, and other services.

g) National Historic Preservation Act & National Environmental Policy Act: No expected impact.

h) Promoting and publicizing the project. Press releases throughout the broader Miami-Dade community will be utilized to publicize each phases of the project. In 2010, OLCDC engaged Golin Harris, a national media relations firm, to prepare ongoing communication strategies with the goals of fostering a new image for Opa-locka in the region and attracting new visitors, residents, and tourists.

i) Plans for documenting, evaluating, and disseminating the project results include engaging the media around key project milestones and providing regular public presentations on progress updates.

j) Evidence of impacts achieved. In 2010, OLCDC, City of Opa-locka, Stull & Lee, Design2Form participated in the Vision 20/20 strategic planning process that resulted in the Vision 20/20 Framework Plan - where the idea of the Community Gateways was first promulgated. Since then, the team has implemented several of the Plan's recommendations, including creating design guidelines for development in Magnolia North, obtaining donated land from Habitat for Humanity and public rights-of-way from the City for development of the Community Gateways, and launching a call to national call to artists. Additionally, OLCDC is currently rehabilitating several neighborhood homes and commercial buildings