



Provided below is a brief sampling of recent Our Town projects that demonstrate some of the ways that arts, culture, and/or design can address health/well-being, transportation/infrastructure, or climate-related challenges within a community. These projects represent a range of partners, project activities, and take place in variety of communities around the country.

Health/Well-being

Anne Bluethenthal and Dancers (San Francisco, CA)—FY22 project to support multidisciplinary arts activities that address health equity in San Francisco's Tenderloin district. The project will bring together Tenderloin residents and health providers to share stories of trauma through dialogue, storytelling, music, and movement during workshops, community forums, and collaborative site-specific performances, and collected within an audio and video story archive. This project will encourage communication among healthcare providers and low-income Tenderloin residents, as well as between city agencies. It will align with multiple city agency efforts to address health and wellness for housing insecure residents. The project is a partnership of ABD Productions and San Francisco Arts Commission, the city's Planning Commission, Department of Public Health, and University of California San Francisco's Center for Community Engagement.

City of Natchez, Mississippi (Natchez, MS)—FY16 project to support creation and implementation of a public art and public health initiative. The project features artist residencies in three established Natchez artist organizations; community guided artist interventions co-created with local businesses to inspire healthier living practices; and development of a research program with local universities to measure the impact of artist innovation on community health. The City of Natchez will partner with the Natchez Art Association on community outreach programs, workshops, and exhibits associated with the project. A specific focus will be given to issues of health equity among disproportionately affected low-income communities of color who make up 51% of the total population of Natchez.

First Peoples Fund (Pine Ridge reservation, SD)—FY22 project to support an artist residency pilot program at the Oglala Lakota Artspace on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. The project will invite as many as five Oglala Lakota artists living and working across the country for multi-week residencies at the Oglala Lakota Artspace and will involve intergenerational community members in their activities. The project is a partnership between First Peoples Fund and the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Project activities will encourage artists to pursue arts careers; foster cultural cohesion and connectivity

between the artists and community, especially youth and elders; and boost the feeling of pride in being Lakota.

Springboard for the Arts (Fergus Falls, MN)—FY17 project to support a series of arts-based participatory projects in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. A team of artist organizers will design and facilitate a "Year of Play" in Fergus Falls through a variety of participatory projects, both permanent and temporary, that celebrate the area's unique assets, promote wellness, facilitate community interaction, and connect to the role that mental health has played in the town's identity. The project is a partnership between Springboard for the Arts, the City of Fergus Falls, PartnerSHIP 4 Health, and numerous local arts and civic organizations. Fergus Falls is a town of approximately 13,200 people, roughly 200 miles from St. Paul.

Transportation/Infrastructure

Arts Students League of Denver (Denver, CO)—FY22 project to support arts activities to engage residents, build community connections, and inform planning for road infrastructure improvements on Morrison Road in the Westwood neighborhood of Denver. Project activities include the redesign of outdoor spaces to encourage community gathering and a series of public sculptures on both sides of Morrison Road that reflect the rich history and culture of the neighborhood. All activities will be co-created with residents and are intended to expand the civic engagement of community members. The project is a partnership between the Art Students League of Denver and City & County of Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, joined by numerous local arts and culture organizations and local businesses. Project activities will support a more cohesive, connected corridor for local businesses, community nonprofits, and residents, strengthening relationships and offering a new arts-centered engagement approach to municipal infrastructure projects that can be replicated across the city.

City of Providence (Providence, RI)—FY18 project to support cultural planning and arts programming for the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Extension. The City of Providence, in partnership with WaterFire and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, will coordinate a series of site-specific performances and temporary sculptures along the banks of Providence's historic urban waterway. Artists will lead community engagement to inform the performances and sculptures; both types of work will reference the unique cultural, historic, and environmental character of communities along the river. The Woonasquatucket River and the adjacent neighborhoods of Valley, Olneyville, and Smith Hill were at the heart of Rhode Island's textile manufacturing industry in the 19th century but investment has languished. The project is part of a larger initiative to establish a riverside linear art park and improve environmental quality in these underserved communities.

City of Seattle (Seattle, WA)—FY22 project to support cultural asset mapping and the creation of multidisciplinary artworks which will inform planning and development of a light rail transit project in Seattle. The city will convene a working group of residents, artists, and community organizations to engage in creative cultural mapping and preliminary visioning, followed by a call for artists to co-create artworks with community members. The artworks will be foundational to the planning process for the 14-station extension of the rail line, the largest transit infrastructure investment in Seattle's history. The project will be a partnership among the City of Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods, the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, and the Delridge Neighborhood Development Association. The process of co-creating artworks and hearing each other's stories will instill trust and encourage collaboration among participants, establishing an approach to building community partnerships for infrastructure planning.

Kounkuey Design Initiative, Inc. (Coachella Valley, CA)—FY22 project to support community-driven art and a mentorship program to advance connection among residents in California's Eastern Coachella Valley. Kounkuey Design Initiative will engage local artists and designers to mentor young artists, stage exhibitions in the Eastern Coachella Valley, and offer arts-based platforms through which residents can advocate for improved public services, such as transportation infrastructure. Kounkuey will partner with the Desert Recreation District, the local government entity responsible for the development, maintenance, and operation of public facilities in the Coachella Valley. The project will leverage the power of art to combat social isolation and continue building a regional community network that connects the area's dispersed and unincorporated towns. Intended Beneficiaries: The project will benefit the underserved and disadvantaged communities and residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley in California.

Climate

Friends of A Studio in the Woods (Plaquemines Parish, LA)—FY21 project to support community engagement activities, arts programming, a festival, and an artist residency in Plaquemines Parish, located on the southern Louisiana coast. Plaquemines Parish, in partnership with A Studio in the Woods, will host artist, biologist, and educator Brandon Ballengée in residence. Ballengée will facilitate a series of participatory artmaking activities that respond directly to threats faced by the community, including rising sea levels and other ecological impacts due to climate change. Participants will conduct "citizen science" (or ecological research) and create works of art interpreting their findings and envisioning strategies for adaptation and sustainability. Activities will culminate in a festival celebrating community resilience, local natural resources, and the rich culture practiced by parish members. This project will inspire visions of a collective future survival through participatory artmaking with local youth, fisherfolk, oil workers, local government, and community members.

Mary Miss – City as Living Laboratory (Milwaukee, WI)—FY21 project to support WaterMarks, a community engagement, arts programming, and public art project in the 30th Street Corridor

neighborhood of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In partnership with the Milwaukee Department of City Development, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewer District, North West Side Community Development Corporation, and other local organizations, CALL/City as Living Laboratory will highlight the realities and concerns of underserved neighborhoods that have been vulnerable to environmental injustices. A series of interactive public art installations will convey stories and perspectives of local residents, scientists, and environmental experts to create an effective approach to artist and community-led environmental activism.

Notch Theatre Company (Anchorage/Fairbanks/Juneau/Nome/North Slope, AK)—FY21 project to support an intergenerational story sharing and theater program about issues of land sovereignty, climate change, and the local economy with the Iñupiaq community of Alaska. Professional playwrights from the Iñupiaq community will conduct public story-sharing events, and incorporate the residents' stories about the connection to their land into short plays for live performances that will tour the region. The project will raise awareness of local economic shifts and the impacts of climate change uniquely experienced in rural Alaskan towns, and facilitate dialogue among residents around their shared future. The project is a collaboration among Notch Theatre Company, eight villages of the Northern Slope in Alaska, and other local partners.

University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa, AL)—FY21 project to support Flow Tuscaloosa, a series of art-making workshops, a community celebration, and an exhibition to accompany the restoration of Hurricane Creek in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Artists will lead youth and other residents in a series of lantern-making workshops exploring the theme of river access, offering up prototypes of lanterns for future permanent installations along the creek. Residents will use lanterns from the workshops, as well as others created by local artists, in a community procession and celebration of the creek restoration effort. The activities will demonstrate the role artists can play in deepening community connection, encourage residents to become stewards to protect the creek, and illustrate possibilities for artistic interventions throughout city parks. Project partners will include the City of Tuscaloosa Public Art Committee, curatorial group Salvage Collective, Friends of Hurricane Creek, and Tuscaloosa City Schools.