



## **FY 2016 Our Town – Vacant Properties Projects**

*Reanimating abandoned properties was a theme this year with projects employing creative placemaking in post-industrial cities. On either a temporary or permanent basis, these cities are accessing the arts to facilitate community discussions and planning, activate abandoned spaces, connect vacant properties to their surrounding neighborhood, and support equitable revitalization.*

**Number of Grants: 9**

**Total Dollar Amount: \$450,000**

### **ARTs East New York**

\$100,000 Brooklyn, NY

To support Living Livonia. The project will involve the activation of a 20,000-square-foot vacant lot in East New York. Project activities include artist residencies, the establishment of an artisan market, community planning workshops, and creative entrepreneurship training. ARTs East New York will partner with New York City Department of City Planning, Local Development Corporation of East New York, and Brooklyn Arts Council to recruit local artists and creative entrepreneurs to transform a vacant property into a burgeoning public space hosting artist studios and small business storefronts. Living Livonia will empower local residents by providing both entrepreneurship and community engagement training to facilitate conversation and planning for the future of East New York. East New York has been on the receiving end of displaced residents in New York City for more than a decade with 34% of the community living below the poverty line.

### **Artspace**

\$50,000 New Haven, CT

To support Game On!, Artspace's annual citywide Open Studios festival. The festival will engage artists and community members through commissioned works of art that will explore how the Goffe Street Armory can connect with the surrounding neighborhood. With guidance from the City of New Haven and members of a neighborhood planning committee envisioning the Armory's future, Game On! will work with adjacent partner organizations-Prescott Bush Senior public housing, Hillhouse High, New Haven Correctional Center, and DeGale Field-to re-brand the vacant Armory and link it more closely to its surroundings. The festival activities will support the hundreds of artists and more than ten thousand community members who participate in the festival, as well the neighborhood organizations that may benefit from a re-branded armory.

### **Center for Land Reform, Inc. (aka Center for Community Progress)**

\$25,000 Flint, MI

To support A Bridge Between Policy and Design: Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties. Center for Community Progress will partner with the J. Max Bond Center on Design for the Just City at City College of New York to equip local city leaders from across the country with knowledge, systems, and creative placemaking tools to transform vacant lots in ways that support equitable revitalization. Project activities include a learning exchange between local government, community development, and arts leaders; an assessment of policy barriers that impede the ability of local organizations to implement creative placemaking on vacant properties; and a transmission of lessons learned to Center for Community Progress' network. As a national leader on solutions for blight and vacancy, Center for Community Progress serves as the leading resource for local, state, and federal policies and best practices that address the full cycle of property revitalization, from blight prevention through the acquisition and maintenance of problem properties, to their productive reuse.

**City of Holyoke, Massachusetts**

\$50,000 Holyoke, MA

To support I-391 Art Park. The City of Holyoke intends to transform a heavily trafficked, vacant, unkempt highway underpass and parking lot into a public park with improved lighting and art installations. The project, a partnership comprising the city, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and several local arts and civic organizations, will connect the Springdale neighborhood to downtown, providing a safe walking route for the largely Latino residents who live in the area. The park also will encourage new thinking about South Holyoke as a safe and vibrant neighborhood in which to live and invest.

**City of Providence, Rhode Island**

\$100,000 Providence, RI

To support neighborhood transformation: Cranston Street Armory animated by art. The multidisciplinary project will envision potential redevelopment strategies for the vacant armory building and adjacent park through a combination of community engagement with artists, community organizers, and residents; innovative arts programming; and community design charrettes led by architecture firm Durkee Brown. The project is a partnership comprising the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism, FirstWork, and more than a dozen arts and community organizations. The goal is to revitalize the historic armory building as a catalyst for economic development in the surrounding West Side neighborhood, where one-third of families live below the poverty level.

**Harrison Center for the Arts**

\$75,000 Indianapolis, IN

To support Pre-enactment Theater. The initiative is designed to revive a sense of community pride and fuel both neighborhood and commercial revitalization. Local actors and designers will collaborate with nearby schools and local stakeholders to re-envision the Monon 16 neighborhood as a vibrant community via set design and performing arts. Pilot performances will take place in vacant storefronts and abandoned lots to demonstrate the potential of the Monon 16 and celebrate existing assets. Partners include Harrison Center for the Arts, City of Indianapolis, and Local Initiatives Support Corporation. Located in a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Promise Zone, Monon 16 is a neighborhood in which 32.7% of the residents live in poverty and 33% of the 4,098 properties sit vacant.

**Site:Lab, Inc. (aka SITE:LAB)**

\$50,000 Grand Rapids, MI

To support temporary, site-specific installations and performance-based art in the Roosevelt Park neighborhood. Slated for redevelopment by Habitat for Humanity in 2017, three acres of land have been made available to Site:Lab for an interim use to facilitate dialogue about the site's redevelopment and provide unexpected arts encounters for the community. Vacant houses on the property already have been transformed into studios for artist residencies and hubs of public engagement. The City of Grand Rapids will partner with Site:Lab in year-long activities that will culminate in large-scale installations by national and international artists as part of the ArtPrize Competition, which attracts more than 400,000 visitors annually. Roosevelt Park is a primarily Hispanic community located two miles from downtown Grand Rapids.

**Trust for Public Land (aka TPL)**

\$50,000 San Francisco, CA

To support the design of Lynn Brook Park in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Trust for Public Land will partner with Public Art Chattanooga, and local community groups to facilitate public workshops, select an artist/design team,

*Some details of the projects listed are subject to change, contingent upon prior Arts Endowment approval. For the most up to date project information, please use the NEA's online [grant search](#) system.*

oversee design work, and implement public art and/or arts programming. The transformation of this 1.4-acre vacant lot into a community park is a response to goals and needs articulated in Thrive 2055: a citizen-led planning process, Chattanooga's Neighborhood Assessment, and the city's Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Assessment. The proposed park is accessible by a ten-minute walk to a diverse population of more than 2,550 Chattanooga residents.

**Wilmington Renaissance Corporation (aka WRC)**

\$75,000          Wilmington, DE

To support the design of pocket parks and passages in Wilmington's Creative District. Wilmington Renaissance Corporation will commission the Philadelphia-based design firm, Groundswell, to connect creatively the adjacent neighborhoods with downtown cultural institutions. City of Wilmington Department of Planning and Development will assist in the implementation of the project and public outreach as part of the adopted 2012 Creative District Vision Plan. Alleyways and vacant spaces will be reimagined as potential community gathering spaces, venues for performance, and aesthetically appealing corridors that drive increased foot traffic and activation of the downtown.