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## **Forecast to Pilot Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners in Five Minnesota Cities**

(SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA) April 18, 2017 — Forecast Public Art is partnering with the American Planning Association (APA) to develop and pilot a *Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners*, made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town program and Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation.

*Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners* will be a resource for planners serving small and mid-sized American cities. By developing this learning tool, Forecast seeks to fill a void in the current options available to planners, as well as those in allied professions, such as landscape architecture, engineering and architecture.

Five cities in Minnesota have been selected by Forecast to participate in the pilot project to develop and beta test the tool in 2017 and 2018: **Austin, Mankato, Red Wing, Rochester, and Winona.**

"Public art can play a vital role in establishing and building community character," said Jennifer Henaghan, AICP, Deputy Research Director at APA. "Beyond enhancing aesthetics, incorporating public art into planning can enhance economic development, build community engagement, and create communities of lasting value that are both equitable and sustainable."

Forecast Public Art will facilitate the two-year pilot project using its extensive experience in all aspects of public art, community-engaged design and placemaking. Forecast has advanced dozens of strategic, community-based projects and visions across the United States.

"Forecast has long been a leading force nationally for facilitating quality, accessible and meaningful public art and placemaking efforts for cities," said Theresa Sweetland, Executive Director of Forecast. "This pilot aims to take that work a step further by making those same tools and resources available to planners and cities anywhere."

A focus of the pilot project is improving the health of the five selected cities, which could include the physical health of citizens, economic prosperity, community wellbeing, social cohesion, livability and a healthy environment.

"Healthy cities boast a quality of life that helps attract and retain talent, businesses, industry, as well as cultural vibrancy," said Tim Penny, President and CEO of the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation.

"We are thrilled that Forecast Public Art and the American Planning Association have partnered to explore how public art can bring thoughtful, innovative solutions to community planning issues like health and wellness," said Jason Schupbach, director of Design and Creative Placemaking at the NEA. "We are eager to learn alongside the selected cities as their pilot projects unfold."

## About

**Forecast Public Art** activates people, networks and proven practices to advance the transformational power of arts in public life. For nearly 40 years Forecast has fostered dynamic, inclusive and resilient communities through public art, community-engaged design and transformative placemaking. Forecast is respected regionally, nationally and internationally for a unique combination of responsive consulting services, support for public artists, and abundant resources, including *Public Art Review*, the world's leading public art journal.

Visit [www.forecastpublicart.org](http://www.forecastpublicart.org) to learn more about Forecast Public Art.

**The American Planning Association (APA)** is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning—physical, economic and social—so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. Members of APA help create communities of lasting value and encourage civic leaders, business interests and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives. APA has offices in Washington, D.C., and Chicago.

Visit [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org) to learn more about the American Planning Association.

**Our Town** is the National Endowment for the Arts' primary creative placemaking grants program, and invests in projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core. Through partnerships on the local, state, and federal levels, the NEA brings the best in creative placemaking to communities of every scale.

Visit [www.arts.gov/](http://www.arts.gov/) to learn more about the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF)**, a donor-supported foundation, invests for economic growth in the 20 counties of south central and southeastern Minnesota. The Foundation has provided more than \$100 million in grants, loans and programming within the region during the past 30 years. SMIF's key interests include early childhood, community and economic development. To learn more about our work and mission, visit [www.smifoundation.org](http://www.smifoundation.org).



## Selected Cities Overview

### Austin, MN

The City of Austin has an active arts community, but recognizes the potential for even greater impact. The City recently completed a new comprehensive land use plan that includes specific policies to strengthen support and cooperation between the City and the Austin Area Commission for the Arts, as well as to explore the role of arts within their community. With an increasingly diverse population and 50 languages represented in their school system, Austin is seeking to promote social cohesion in its community through public art that can be universally appreciated. In a recent City survey, improving cross-cultural relationships and ensuring Austin is a destination for art, music and creativity both ranked highly. In response to this demand, Austin is excited to participate in *Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners* to accelerate progress toward making Austin a healthier and more vibrant place to live.

Visit [www.ci.austin.mn.us/](http://www.ci.austin.mn.us/) to learn more about the City of Austin.

**Mankato, MN**

The City of Mankato is dedicated to achieving downtown revitalization, establishing an arts and culture district, and developing a community culture that supports the arts. In line with these goals, Mankato seeks to enhance quality of life through participation in *Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners*. The City recognizes that investing in the creative economy builds a vibrant community, which helps attract and retain residents, workforce, businesses, and visitors, as well as create a sense of community. The City saw such results from a mural in Mankato that increased foot traffic in the area and generated conversation. A goal of the City of Mankato is community improvement through public art and placemaking.

Visit [www.mankatomn.gov/](http://www.mankatomn.gov/) to learn more about the City of Mankato.

**Red Wing, MN**

The City of Red Wing understands that public art reinforces attachment to the community, is a conduit for conversations between artists and citizens, and is accessible to all. The City of Red Wing's current Comprehensive Community Plan includes objectives to support public art projects and strategies. The City has undertaken partnerships and arts activities in recent years that have put them on the cusp of successfully achieving its objectives. The City is excited to participate in *Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners* by advancing knowledge and ability to fully implement its public art and placemaking plans. An important theme that Red Wing intends to weave into its public art and placemaking planning process is equity, as the arts can be a great tool to engage under-represented community members.

Visit [www.red-wing.org/](http://www.red-wing.org/) to learn more about the City of Red Wing.

**Rochester, MN**

The City of Rochester is in the process of a major update to its Comprehensive Plan, and is developing design standards and streetscape guidelines for the downtown area, with a recognition of health as a valued consideration. The opportunity to participate in *Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners* is exciting and timely. The City's Comprehensive Plan inspires further transformation of the City's core and gateway corridors to be a highly desirable, active, vibrant, and attractive places that draw residents, visitors, and talent. The *Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners* dovetails nicely into these efforts and could be a catalyst to develop strategies to inspire and implement the integration of art in the City in a variety of contexts. Medical professions recognize the benefits of the arts in medicine and in health and healing. A pilot effort in the home of the Mayo Clinic and the Destination Medical Center economic development initiative, would elevate these benefits in the community setting and provide opportunity to millions of visitors and residents to experience the positive influences of the arts. Accessing existing interdisciplinary efforts to support healthy, vibrant, and livable communities will expand the City's opportunity to test the effectiveness of these efforts and develop best practices transferrable to mid-sized communities across the United States.

Visit [www.rochestermn.gov/](http://www.rochestermn.gov/) to learn more about the City of Rochester.

**Winona, MN**

The City of Winona recognizes the power of art in maintaining and enhancing community vitality and is excited to participate in the *Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners*. The City currently supports art on a variety of levels through its Fine Arts Commission and support of events such as the Shakespeare Festival, Midwest Music Festival, Frozen River Film Festival, Beethoven Festival and many others. The City also partners with individual artists and local institutions such as Winona State and St. Mary's University. The City hired a full time Arts Coordinator in January 2017 to further enhance the development of Winona's art initiatives, create a community-wide arts/ culture strategic plan, and collaborate with other arts organizations. The City sees participation in *Public Art and Placemaking Tool for City Planners* as an opportunity to advance planning for arts, produce a demonstration project that showcases the numerous benefits of public art, and help take public art in Winona to the next level. This is an especially important moment because the City is creating new downtown design codes and standards, and intends to include public art as part of future streetscape designs.

Visit [www.cityofwinona.com/](http://www.cityofwinona.com/) to learn more about the City of Winona.

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