

# City of Minneapolis

## Request for Committee Action

**To:** Community Development & Regulatory Services  
**Date:** 8/23/2016  
**From:** City Coordinator's Office  
**Lead Staff:** Gulgun Kayim  
**Presented by:** Gulgun Kayim  
**File Type:** Action  
**Subcategory:** Grant

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**Subject:**

City of Minneapolis partnership applications to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town program

**Description:**

Authorizing the City of Minneapolis to act as the local government partner in two (2) applications to the NEA Our Town program – 1) Pillsbury House + Theatre for The Museum In The Streets in the amount of \$200,000; 2) West Bank Business Association for Cedar Avenue Arts Walk in the amount of \$200,000.

**Previous Actions:**

Past Minneapolis applications to the NEA Our Town program. Council Actions on 2/25/11, 12/14/12, 12/12/14, and 9/11/15.

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**Ward/Address:**

All Wards

The Bryant, Central, and Field/Regina neighborhoods; Hennepin Avenue; Cedar Riverside neighborhood.

**Background/Analysis:**

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grant program supports creative placemaking projects that help to transform communities into lively, beautiful, and resilient places with the arts at their core.

NEA Our Town Arts Engagement, Cultural Planning, and Design Projects require a partnership between a nonprofit organization and a local government. Matching grants range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. Each local government -- whether applying as the lead applicant or as the primary partner with a nonprofit organization -- may submit up to two (2) applications.

Information about the City's Our Town application selection process was communicated through:

- The Arts, Culture and Creative Economy email list, webpage, and direct e-mails to previous applicants
- The Minneapolis Arts Commission
- Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC)
- Springboard for the Arts
- Arts Midwest
- Forecast Public Art

The City also hosted informational meetings, at the American Swedish Institute and the Textile Center of Minnesota. As a result of communicating the City's process, several inquiries about potential partnership applications were received. Staff provided extensive technical assistance to all who indicated an interest in applying and directed to other resources if appropriate. A total of three (3) proposals were received.

An ad hoc committee reviewed the proposals. Committee members included:

- John Stiles, Mayor's Office (invited)
- Mary Petersen, Council President's Office
- Sara Lopez Lara, Council Vice President's Office
- Patrick Sadler, Office of the Chair of the Community Development Committee
- Melinda Ludwiczak, Minneapolis Arts Commission
- Lisa Middag, Minneapolis Arts Commission
- Rebecca Parrell, Community Planning and Economic Development
- Alejandra Tobar Alatriz, Pangea World Theater
- Kathy Mouacheupao, Twin Cities LISC

The following proposals were reviewed based on the NEA agency-wide criteria of artistic excellence and artistic merit.

**The Museum In The Streets submitted by Pillsbury House + Theatre**

**Proposed request to the NEA: \$200,000**

The Bryant, Central, and Field/Regina Neighborhoods in south Minneapolis make up one of three primary settlements of African American residents in Minnesota. New development projects and the shifting of demographics in these neighborhoods have resurfaced hidden history and unresolved racial tension in this community. A coalition of community stakeholders is working to deepen the community's knowledge and understanding of systematic neglect and disinvestment, while illuminating the significant historical impact/power/beauty/culture of African Americans in Minneapolis.

The goal of the Museum In The Streets (MITS) initiative is to engage local African American artists to create and embed place based accessible public art in our community that honors the legacy of those that came before. It will also serve to create a framework for the future curation MITS related art and creative programming.

The Museum In The Streets (MITS) was conceptualized by residents as a way to empower community to support the creation of public art that creates ownership for the people already here, while honoring the legacy of those that came before.

**Prototyping festival submitted by Hennepin Theatre Trust**

**Proposed request to the NEA: \$100,000**

Hennepin Theatre Trust (HTT) proposes a prototyping festival to bring diverse, creative voices into discussions about the Hennepin Avenue Reconstruction project.

HTT will host a Prototyping Festival in 2018 to engage the public and the Public Works Department in creative thinking about how to activate Hennepin Avenue and inform the upcoming Hennepin Avenue Reconstruction project. Prototyping is the use of art, design, and social engagement to envision what a public space can become and how it can serve people. The HTT Festival will bring together teams of artists, community members and design specialists to develop prototypes that reflect Festival themes and use the streetscape in new and engaging ways. Festival themes will be selected to encourage projects with a social justice orientation.

**Cedar Avenue Arts Walk submitted by the West Bank Business Association**

**Proposed request to the NEA: \$200,000**

The Cedar Avenue Arts Walk is a community driven project, one that benefits residents, guests as well as area businesses. The Cedar Arts Walk will create a visual pathway along the Cedar Avenue commercial corridor, with creative nodes along riverside and Washington that connect to other assets in the neighborhood such as the River, green space, park space, and our cultural institutions. Community support for this project is broad, and is aligned and rooted in West Bank Business Association's Strategic Plan.

In 2015, the West Bank Business Association hosted a series of pop-up art installations in conjunction with the neighborhood's Earth Day celebration and clean-up. They restored a community garden, hosted a Little Free Library, placed murals along Cedar Avenue, created a pop-up herb garden, installed an interactive mural on the Southern Theater and more. In the spring of 2016, they hosted another series of art pop-ups, that paired a variety of artists with businesses.

The Cedar Avenue Arts Walk request is to support the second, more permanent phase of this work. From 2017-2018 the West Bank Business Association plans to install a cultural pathway through the Cedar Riverside neighborhood. These installations will build off the success and knowledge of their past work -- through those pop-ups they learned more about the successful locations, lighting opportunities, and subject matter that is well received by the neighborhood.

### **Recommendation**

The committee felt all proposed projects were important, and that all proposals had the opportunity for improvement before being submitted to the NEA. They discussed each proposal based on the NEA criteria and City goals and came to a consensus to recommend the two proposals that ranked higher with the strongest, most complete applications. The committee selected Cedar Avenue Arts Walk and The Museum In the Streets projects for the City Council Community Development committee to consider. The committee also provided valuable feedback that will be used to improve selected applications or to seek other grants.

Applications to the NEA Our Town program are due September 12, 2016. The earliest announcement of grant award or rejection will be made by the NEA in April 2017. The earliest start date for the NEA period of performance is August 1, 2017.

### **Financial Review:**

**No financial impact.**