

Applicant: Arts Council, Inc., Huntsville, AL

Project: Connectivity and Engagement Thru Art-Public Art Program Development for Huntsville, Alabama

Attachment 2 – Project Narrative

a) Project Budget – The Arts Council (TAC), in partnership with the City of Huntsville, AL (City), respectfully requests a \$50,000 matching grant from the National Endowment for the Arts’ Our Town Program to support the development of a Public Art Master Plan for our community. The project budget primarily funds consulting fees associated with development of Huntsville’s Public Art Master Plan, which will include a permanent funding mechanism to support both acquisition and commission of works of public art. Upon completion of the Public Art Master Plan, the project budget also includes a \$20,000 acquisition fee to immediately move the community’s public art program forward while permanent funds grow to support new commissions and additional acquisitions.

Under the leadership of Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle, the City of Huntsville will provide \$25,000 in direct support for this initiative, with an additional \$5,500 in grant support requested from the Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA). Both the City and TAC will provide in-kind staff support for this project, and the community will also assist with donated hotel rooms and additional volunteer services. Today, the Huntsville community is well-positioned to move forward with a public art master plan. In 2010 The Arts Council, with partner institutions, launched a city-wide, biennial sculpture trail; the inaugural budget for this project was \$101,400, which was supported by contributions of \$53,400 (including ASCA grant funding) and in-kind support totaling \$48,000. Community support for Huntsville’s recent public art efforts prompted TAC and the City to join forces to become the first Alabama community to develop a Public Art Master Plan.

b) Major Project Activities – The Arts Council’s Our Town grant will enable Huntsville, Alabama to develop a Public Art Master Plan. The Arts Council has identified Via Partnership and Todd Bressi Urban Design as proposed consultants for this project, and in summer 2012 TAC will complete a final RFP process and contract with consultants for plan development.

In fall 2012 (Oct. 2012 – Jan. 2013), TAC’s consultants will lead community meetings and charettes with key community stakeholders including, but not limited to, elected officials and representatives, business groups, neighborhood associations, architects and planners, artists, arts

organizations, etc. Community meetings will also engage participants in Huntsville's downtown development trips to Chattanooga, TN, and Greenville, SC; these community trips highlighted the impact of public art on community vibrancy and provided options for public art commissions, acquisitions, and donations. The plan consultants will also review existing community reference materials and resources such as the Create Huntsville Community Cultural Plan, CVB reports, Chamber of Commerce Reports, economic development plans, City CIP budgets, etc.

In winter/spring 2013 (Feb. – April 2013), project consultants will conduct field work and research to review and assess prospective public art locations based on Master Plan documents, neighborhood plans, parks and greenways plans, etc. (Huntsville currently offers 22 miles of greenway space and the City's Greenways Plan identifies over 180 miles of additional trails creating interconnected community corridors.) Public infrastructure including roadways, bridges, transportation systems, and public buildings will be examined, and the program partnership between TAC and the City will be examined. A community historian will also provide context as well as future resource materials for the Public Art program.

By spring 2013 (May-June 2013), project consultants will present initial Public Art Master Plan recommendations to TAC and the City, followed by community meetings with civic leaders and key stakeholders and focus groups with constituents.

In summer 2013 (July – Aug. 2013), the project consultants will edit the plan and present a final draft of the Public Art Master Plan to include proposed guidelines, funding mechanism, acquisition/commission processes, maintenance, and proposal for program administration. In fall 2013 (Sept. – Oct. 2013), the final revised draft of the Public Art Master Plan will be presented to TAC, City, and stakeholders, including elected officials.

At the end of 2013 (Nov. – Dec. 2013), the Public Art funding plan (e.g. a Percent for Art Ordinance) will be presented to the Huntsville City Council for vote and, pending approval, in January 2014 the City of Huntsville's Public Art Master Plan will be published.

In winter 2014 (Feb. – March 2014), the Master Plan will be implemented to acquire a public sculpture from the 2012-14 SPACES Biennial Sculpture Trail and a Call to Artists will be developed for the community's initial public art commission thru the Public Art Master Plan.

Huntsville, Alabama is a city of unlimited potential, as demonstrated fifty years ago when Huntsville's Marshall Space Flight Center led the development of the Saturn V rocket to propel man to the moon. Today, Huntsville is still home to Redstone Arsenal and Marshall Space Flight Center, as well as the nation's second largest Research Park providing homes for aerospace, telecommunications, and

biotech companies. Over the last five years, Huntsville has garnered numerous accolades, including designation as “One of America’s Best Performing Cities” (Forbes, 2012), “One of Top 20 Leading Metros for Business”(Forbes, 2011) “One of the Country’s Top 10 Cities for Raising Families” (Kiplinger’s Magazine, 2010), “One of the Top 10 Smartest Cities in the World” (Forbes, 2009), and “Nation’s Best City” (Kiplinger’s Magazine, 2009).

Huntsville grew dramatically in the 20th century as cotton farms and textile mills gave way to Redstone Arsenal and the aerospace industry. Today the City of Huntsville is delineated by its business, military, medical, university, historic, and residential districts. At the same time, Huntsville is working to build an inclusive community, fully integrated and connected through business, education, and civic activity. Huntsville’s first city-wide public art effort, the 2010-12 SPACES Biennial Sculpture Trail, connected the community with outdoor sculpture placed from UAHuntsville to downtown to Alabama A&M University. In developing a Public Art Master Plan for the City of Huntsville, TAC and the City will work to strengthen the character of Huntsville’s public spaces to increase the livability, walkability, and desirability of our neighborhoods and our community. In identifying and proposing current and future sites for public art within the community, the Public Art Master Plan will also complement the City of Huntsville’s Master Plan and current urban design efforts to build connectivity between the community’s diverse residential, business, civic, and military areas. Planners will target the City’s infrastructure investment zones, including downtown Huntsville, to develop more lively neighborhoods and inviting public spaces. In addition to providing connections, the Public Art Master Plan will also provide direction within public spaces and animate the community to create lively, engaging, sustainable places throughout the city.

c) Outcome(s) and Measurements – Huntsville’s Public Art Master Plan will support the NEA outcome for Livability: strengthening communities through the arts. As stated above, Huntsville, Alabama is a thriving high-tech community, with more engineers per capita than any city in the nation. The City of Huntsville, together with The Arts Council, recognizes that economic developments are only one indicator of a successful community, and city leaders and the arts community are committed to better engaging citizens through a public art plan that will add meaning to our shared community space and reflect the unique qualities of our region. Upon completion, Huntsville’s Public Art Master Plan will also support the NEA outcome for Access: Americans throughout the nation experience art; the plan creation will engage the community in discussion about public art, and the final Master Plan will include citizen

involvement in the public art process. Both local residents and visitors to our community will experience Huntsville's public art in the future.

TAC and the City will assess and evaluate the development of Huntsville's Public Art Master Plan; while program measurements are currently under development, the partners will utilize impact indicators recommended by Americans for the Arts' "Resources for Evaluating the Social Impact of the Arts." A quantitative evaluation rubric with qualitative response mechanisms will be developed, and will measure the artistic, social, environmental, and economic value of the plan development. Participants in the plan development will also provide project analysis and feedback, which will inform future civic involvement in the Public Art program.

d) Schedule – A summary of the schedule for development of Huntsville's Public Art Master Plan is detailed in section B, and includes the following:

July - August 2012: Completion of formal RFP process and contracting with consultants to develop Public Art Master Plan.

Oct. 2012 – Jan. 2013: Completion of community meetings and charettes on public art, and review of existing community reference materials and resources.

Feb. - April 2013: Field work and research to review and assess public art locations. Community history completed to provide context and future resource materials for artists.

May – June 2013: Draft Public Art Master Plan completed; community meetings provide input for final revisions.

July – August 2013: Final draft of Public Art Master Plan submitted.

Sept. – Oct. 2013: Presentation of Public Art Master Plan to elected officials, city leadership, and community stakeholders.

Nov. – Dec. 2013: Adoption of Public Art Legislation by Huntsville Planning Commission and Huntsville City Council.

Jan. – March 2014: Publication of Public Art Master Plan, followed by acquisition of public sculpture and development of a "Call to Artists" for Huntsville's first commissioned public art.

e) Partners, Key Organizations, Individuals, and Works of Art – The Arts Council, Inc. will serve as lead applicant for Huntsville, Alabama's Our Town grant initiative, and TAC will work in partnership with its primary partner, the City of Huntsville. The City of Huntsville is the largest local government in North

Alabama, and TAC is the umbrella nonprofit organization that works to advance arts and culture in Huntsville and Madison County, Alabama. TAC's Executive Director will work in tandem with the City of Huntsville's Urban Development Department, including the Manager of Planning Administration, Director of Urban Development, and incoming Urban Planner, and TAC staff will support the plan development. TAC has interviewed national public art consultants endorsed by the Americans for the Arts' Public Art

Network for this project, and proposed consultants Via Partnership and Todd Bressi Urban Design will complete a final RFP process in summer 2012. Via Partnership and Todd Bressi Urban Design have collaborated on nine projects from California to Florida, including master plans for Pinellas County and DC Creates! Together, Via Partnership and Todd Bressi Urban Design develop plans that embed local narratives and reflect local culture while developing prime opportunities for artists; both consulting firms work to link public art to broader issues of urbanism, design, and economic development strategies while building connectivity throughout a community.

In addition to the lead partners and consultants, The Arts Council also represents over 150 member arts and cultural organizations and individual artists. TAC will engage the Huntsville/Madison County arts community in the project, as well as local arts professionals such as Glenn Dasher, internationally-recognized sculptor and Dean of UA Huntsville's College of Liberal Arts. Other area nonprofits such as Big Spring Partners (a downtown development organization) and Downtown 47 (a group of young professionals promoting the cultural, aesthetic, social, and economic vitality of downtown Huntsville) will be engaged in the planning process and may provide future support.

f) Target Community – Huntsville's Public Art Master Plan will benefit the residents of the Huntsville Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes over 417,000 residents. Approximately 71% of Huntsville's population consists of Caucasian residents, while African-Americans make up 22% of the population. Residents of Asian and Hispanic heritage comprise 2% and 3% of the population, respectively, and altogether 80 countries are represented in Huntsville. The per capita income for Huntsville is \$29,026, and the area is known as a family-friendly community with 26% of the population under the age of 20. Development of Huntsville's Public Art Master Plan will include community engagement with residents from throughout the city, and the project goals include continued involvement of community representatives in the plan implementation. Both the Arts Council and the City of Huntsville actively work to engage and serve the Huntsville MSA, and each year TAC welcomes over 75,000 residents and visitors to downtown Huntsville for the area's largest community festival. Each summer, TAC and the

City also partner to bring over 20,000 residents to downtown Huntsville for summer Concerts in the Park. TAC has also engaged diverse partners and populations in the community-wide Biennial Sculpture Trail.

g) Plans for Promoting and Publicizing – Community engagement is a critical component in the development of Huntsville’s Public Art Master Plan, and the partners will use both traditional media and social media to announce the project and publicize opportunities for community participation. The partners and consultants will work specifically with neighborhood associations, community groups, and business organizations to ensure that residents and business representatives from throughout Huntsville’s diverse industries and socio-economic neighborhoods can participate in community meetings. TAC will also engage its member arts and cultural organizations and individual artists in the process, and community leaders and key stakeholders will be engaged directly by the project partners.

h) Plans for Documenting and Evaluating – The development of Huntsville’s Public Art Plan will be documented through public meetings, interviews, and written summaries, and the final plan will be published jointly by TAC and the City on their respective websites and in print. The evaluation of the plan development will be measured as described in section C above, and the project partners will incorporate both quantitative and qualitative assessments throughout the project. Huntsville’s final Public Art Master Plan will also include permanent assessment criteria for the public art program to evaluate its impact on the community’s sense of place and livability. Over the long-term, the project partners will also work to track social and civic engagement in the arts and civic life through the community’s permanent public art installations.

i) Goals and Impact – TAC and the City of Huntsville are committed to the expansion of public art in our community. Development of a Public Art Master Plan for Huntsville will increase the livability of our region and help create lively, engaging, aesthetic, inclusive, and sustainable places that better connect our community while supporting the city’s urban design, economic development, and social interaction. Upon completion of the Public Art Master Plan, Huntsville will become the first city in Alabama to institute a permanent public art initiative, and Huntsville’s project will serve as a public/private public art model for medium-sized communities across the country.

j) Plans for Making the Project Accessible – In partnership with the project consultants, TAC and the City will work to engage residents of all ages and abilities in development of Huntsville’s Public Art Master Plan. The final plan will sustain this accessibility while providing services, employment, contracting, and volunteer opportunities within public art projects without regard to race, creed, handicap, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or religious preference. It is the goal of the partners to develop a public art program that embraces the ideal of a barrier-free society that promotes the independence, productivity, and integration of persons with disabilities. Accommodation will be provided to enable individuals with disabilities to participate in Huntsville’s public art programs and activities.