

MAKING CONNECTIONS

EAST LAKE STREET CULTURAL CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

2023



Acknowledging the Lands of the Dakota and Ojibwe Peoples

The area addressed in this report stands on the ancestral and contemporary lands of the Dakota and Ojibwe peoples. Authors and sponsors of this report wish to honor and respect Indigenous peoples' past, present, and future, as well as the land itself. We acknowledge that they were forcibly exiled from this land because of aggressive and persistent settler colonialism and that many atrocities have been and continue to be committed against Native peoples here and across the globe. We also recognize that land acknowledgment is merely a first step in a long and complex process of reconciling with the colonial legacy of institutions of government, businesses, as well as nonprofit, religious, educational, and philanthropic entities.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Photo by Tom Borrup

East Lake Street is a street of connections and a place where connections are made. It is one of the most unique areas of the Twin Cities. Its energy and dynamic nature stem from its strategic geographic location, transportation infrastructure, and exhilarating diversity of people who make it home for their entrepreneurial efforts, cultural events, families, and daily activities. While its character is identified with small, diverse restaurants, retail shops, and local services, it is also home to major businesses and institutions that have invested and that operate on or near East Lake Street. The area defined for the purposes of this study includes Pillsbury Ave. on the west to 29th Avenue on the east, up to two blocks north and south on either side of East Lake Street including the Midtown Greenway.

Creative Community Builders was asked to devise an action plan for East Lake Street focusing on its distinctive cultural assets and to make recommendations that build upon earlier planning and input projects. Consultants took several steps:

1. Analyze and distill 14 earlier planning documents.
2. Map cultural and creative assets.
3. Compile historical and census data; practices relative to cultural districts, and economic impact data of the creative sector in Minneapolis.
4. Interview representatives of 18 key “cultural activators”.
5. Survey members of the Lake Street Greenway Partnership (LSGP).
6. Conduct meetings with the Arts and Culture Committee of the LSGP.
7. Develop recommendations for actions, areas for policy change, and investments.

The City of Minneapolis Cultural Corridor Program set as a **primary goal** to:

Strengthen neighborhoods by prioritizing and accelerating economic development, public transit, and affordable housing policies, practices, and resources to **protect the racial diversity and uplift the cultural identity of the city’s areas** where a significant portion of the population is comprised of people of color, Indigenous people, and/or immigrant communities.

Successful cultural districts or corridors have three core ingredients: 1) a robust cluster of cultural assets; 2) a shared sense of identity and purpose; 3) active coordination among these assets and with other businesses, nonprofits, and the public sector. In 2020, the City of Minneapolis approved an ordinance to designate seven such districts.¹ Out of those seven areas, East Lake Street is the cultural corridor with the highest number of Latino-owned businesses with an additional layer of cultural diversity.

¹ <https://www.minneapolis.org/cultural-districts/overview/>

Findings based on information provided by the two important stakeholder groups above revealed challenges in arriving at a consensus about identity, priorities, and strategies. Yet many actions can and should be taken around which there is general agreement.

Vital to implementing actions described in this plan are **leadership** and **coordination**. Much good work by Lake Street stakeholders is ongoing and should be supported simultaneous to building more consensus and collaboration. Major new resources are called for but present no reason to hesitate. Imagination, ingenuity, and caring are not in short supply. Actions are grouped in three clusters and can be implemented in stages.

Items highlighted are **ongoing and immediate**; **first year**; **second year**.

Activation and Design

- Maintain and expand public art projects and events.
- Promote active street life with food trucks, outdoor dining and vending, etc.
- Create an East Lake Design Studio.
- Engage cultural organizations with funding for creative placemaking.
- Adopt a generally accepted corridor identity and purpose.*

Physical Realm

- Promote walkability and safety for people of all ages.
- Invest in many meaningful small-scale public infrastructure projects.
- Include cultural facilities and nonprofits as business investments.
- Make strategic large capital investments that enhance the corridor's cultural identity.
- Designate and highlight formal corridor boundaries based on identity and purpose.

Policy and Capacity Building

- Establish a culturally rooted organization to align and strengthen the corridor's cultural identity.
- Expand efforts of the LSGP to build a shared agenda.
- Enhance understanding and support for the creative economy and cultural sector.
- Support ownership and capacity-building for local makers, artists, culture bearers, and culturally based businesses.
- Build capacity for arts and cultural activators.
- Establish a city-funded Cultural Districts Capital Fund to resource needed efforts.

* Adopting an identity is frequently the first action in developing a cultural district, yet it is more complex here and requires more time and respectful work. As many other recommended actions proceed, they will help foster identity development.

Data in the Appendix of this report provide detailed information on the key cultural activators interviewed serving as an important snapshot of the work, aspirations, and needs of these important nonprofit organizations and businesses that are actively contributing to the corridor.

Collectively, these cultural activators identified a minimum of \$5,500,000 in immediate and future capital needs to advance their core operations and sustain programming. At least another \$5,000,000 is anticipated for future cultural facility development. Corridor-wide, \$100,000,000 in investment needs were identified to move Lake Street forward as a hub of commercial and cultural vitality. Lastly, a need was identified for at least \$25,000,000 for business development on the corridor to drive local ownership, self-sustainability, community programming activities, and support-services operations.

INTRODUCTION

Lake Street

Historically Lake Street is all about connections. Dakota people traveled this path for millennia from the Mississippi River to Bde Maka Ska and the chain of lakes. An 1880s bridge crossing the Mississippi connected Minneapolis to Saint Paul from Lake Street. Also in the 1880s, the Milwaukee Railroad paralleled Lake Street as a critical route connecting local industries and markets east and west. It was no fluke that in 1927 once-giant retailer Sears located its major regional distribution hub and retail store at Lake Street and Chicago Avenue, connecting residents to an unrivaled scale and range of products. At the turn of the millennium the railroad right-of-way became the Midtown Greenway, a major investment of Hennepin County and others.

During the past half century, however, this critical corridor saw its small businesses and services struggle with a gradual revival beginning in the 1990s. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic and then social uprising following the murder of George Floyd in May of 2020, left everyone on East Lake Street staggering. Nonetheless, the people and the street are resilient partly because it is a necessary street for people to travel on and across; one that provides daily essentials—from food to car repair, insurance to dentists. Recent decades have seen waves of immigrants on East Lake Street working hard to build a life and a living. The area has provided affordable and welcoming space and connections for (and to) the multitude of cultures now populating the Twin Cities.

East Lake Street remains one of the most distinct areas of the Twin Cities. Its energy and dynamic nature stem not only from its strategic geographic location and infrastructure, but from the exhilarating diversity of people and institutions who make it home for their entrepreneurial efforts, cultures, families, and daily activities.

Cultural Corridors

Cultural corridors or culture districts are complex. They have a variety of purposes and carry different meanings in different places. Frequently their primary goal is coordination and elevation of creative and/or cultural organizations and their activities, and/or artists and their working spaces. Economic development through tourism and the generation of street-level retail and dining is also a common function. In many scenarios, cultural districts are widely considered forces of gentrification, ultimately raising housing and commercial space costs, dislocating people of lower incomes. But they don't have to be. Cultural corridors or districts may be good for some businesses and for city tax collections but can be stabilizing and directly beneficial for urban neighborhoods and their residents. Progressive communities, including Minneapolis, have set out to realize these positive impacts.

The Minneapolis Cultural Corridor Program, as defined in the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan, set out a specific goal to:

Strengthen neighborhoods by prioritizing and accelerating economic development, public transit, and affordable housing policies, practices, and resources to protect the racial diversity and uplift the cultural identity of the city's areas where a significant portion of the population is comprised of people of color, Indigenous people, and/or immigrant communities.

Of seven preliminary corridors identified across the city, East Lake Street is probably the most diverse and complex. As linear space, it stretches through multiple neighborhoods and city wards. Its history during the past half century is mixed, seen by some as a socially and economically problematic space. Physically and economically, East Lake Street grew rapidly in the early 1900s but experienced disinvestment and decline from the 1950s. A revival began in the 1990s, yet negative perceptions and challenges persist. Latinx and Somali immigrants are widely credited with bringing new energy and businesses, especially to East Lake Street, yet those entrepreneurs are not alone. Black, Native, Asian, Nordic, and other cultures, organizations, and enterprises are important parts of the picture.

Successful cultural districts or corridors have three core ingredients, and these are the things the East Lake Cultural Corridor has and can build on. First, a robust cluster of cultural assets; second, a shared sense of identity and purpose; and third, cohesion and/or active coordination among these assets and with other businesses, nonprofits, and the public sector. For East Lake Street, these assets are present, although not always fully recognized. Yet, identity presents a challenge. A framework for cohesion exists but it requires enhanced and ongoing work. This third ingredient, when successful, is made up of what's known as horizontal networks – active working relationships among people and entities that are different, such as public, private, and nonprofit sectors as well as people of different cultures, incomes, ages, etc.

THE GROUND WE OCCUPY

Lake Street History

Located on the ancestral home of the Dakota and Ojibwe people, among other Indigenous communities, East Lake Street today serves as the official boundary of several Minneapolis neighborhoods, including Central, Corcoran, Longfellow, Lyndale, Phillips, Powderhorn Park, and Whittier. The businesses, residences, and stories that populate Lake Street consistently position the corridor as a major artery for the Twin Cities landscape and a destination for people from around the globe.

When the City of Minneapolis was established in 1856, Lake Street served as an east-west thoroughfare roughly a mile beyond the city's southern border. It was, in essence, a southern suburb. Lake Street experienced its first substantial population surge in the 1870s from Scandinavian immigrants who quickly made the corridor a commercial center for the city. In the 1880s, Lake Street was designated as the site for a bridge across the Mississippi River to connect Saint Paul and Minneapolis. By the turn of the 20th century, several streetcar lines traversed and crossed the corridor, extending the city further to the south. Emerging industries like steel were integral to Lake Street's early development, particularly during World War II. Bolstering the corridor was the Milwaukee Railroad's Short Line, which was extended parallel to Lake Street and brought with it a gateway to manufacturing for the area. After many tragic accidents, the Minneapolis City Council ordered the railroad to lower the rail line into a trench between 1910 and 1915. This eventually became the Midtown Greenway.

By the mid-1950s, a shifting transportation landscape led to streetcars being replaced along the Lake Street corridor in exchange for personal cars and buses. As such, Lake Street was lined with many automobile dealerships. Interstate highway development in the 1960s and 1970s played a key role in demarcating neighborhoods throughout the city. Notably, these neighborhood divisions formed by the highway system and policies such as redlining and deed covenant restrictions reinforced segregation by race and class. Large parking lots and car culture further changed the role of Lake Street as dozens of automotive repair shops began to cluster along the corridor. Concurrently, many small businesses struggled as Interstate highway construction failed to include exits and entrances on Lake Street, contributing to vacancies and relocation for many business owners. The abandonment of Nicollet Avenue from the rail corridor to Lake Street for construction of a Kmart superblock in the late 1970s was meant to revitalize but did the opposite.



Photo by Tom Borrup

Beginning with the 1970s, crime and disinvestment on Lake Street became a pervasive issue. With the closure of the Sears-Roebuck catalogue center in the 1980s and finally the store in the early 1990s, a prominent fixture at the corner of Lake and Chicago that once employed 2,000 workers, symbolized the corridor's distress.

Despite these challenges, small entrepreneurs pursued opportunities on Lake Street. The emergence of immigrant businesses, particularly those serving Latinx and East African communities, became a mainstay and are now widely recognized as a core attribute of the corridor. Since the turn of the 21st century, developments have primarily focused on revitalizing abandoned properties into new commercial and residential sites. Investment in transit helped connect local neighborhoods to Lake Street via the Blue Line light rail, and the Midtown Greenway quickly became a nationally recognized model for urban cycling infrastructure. A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line along Lake Street is currently under development following the opening of a north-south BRT line on Chicago Avenue in late 2022.

Also, in recent decades corporations and institutions, such as Wells Fargo Mortgage, Allina Health, Abbott Northwestern Hospital, and others committed three-quarters of a billion dollars to locate and expand on or adjacent to Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway. In 2024, Metro Transit will commence operation of a rapid bus line on Lake Street, intersecting with a newly opened line on Chicago Avenue. The City of Minneapolis has committed tens of millions to acquire the Kmart site and reopen Nicollet Avenue over the next decade bringing major new housing, retail, and other developments.

The most recent turbulence for Lake Street came in 2020 when the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police at the nearby intersection of 38th and Chicago sparked a civil uprising that resulted in major property damage and businesses closing on Lake Street. More than 250 businesses on the corridor were damaged or destroyed, and the police precinct at the corner of Lake and Minnehaha sustained fire damage and was shuttered. The devastation, paired with a global health pandemic that left many businesses temporarily or permanently shut down, continues to be a challenge for the community. Still, Lake Street endures as a gateway to prosperity for many newcomers calling the Twin Cities home while moving toward a resilient future that honors its robust and diverse history.

References:

- Visit Lake Street <https://www.visitlakestreet.com/>
- Minneapolis Cultural Districts - [East Lake Street https://www.minneapolis.org/cultural-districts/districts/east-lake-street/](https://www.minneapolis.org/cultural-districts/districts/east-lake-street/)
- MinnPost <https://www.minnpost.com/metro/2022/05/two-years-after-his-death-in-minneapolis-george-floyds-words-and-image-live-on-in-art/>
- Sears Building http://www.placeography.org/index.php/Sears_Building_900_E_Lake_Street_Minneapolis_MN#:~:text=40%20homes%20were%20razed%20to,and%20Company%20left%20the%20neighborhood.



Photo by Tom Borrup

Population Characteristics and Trends

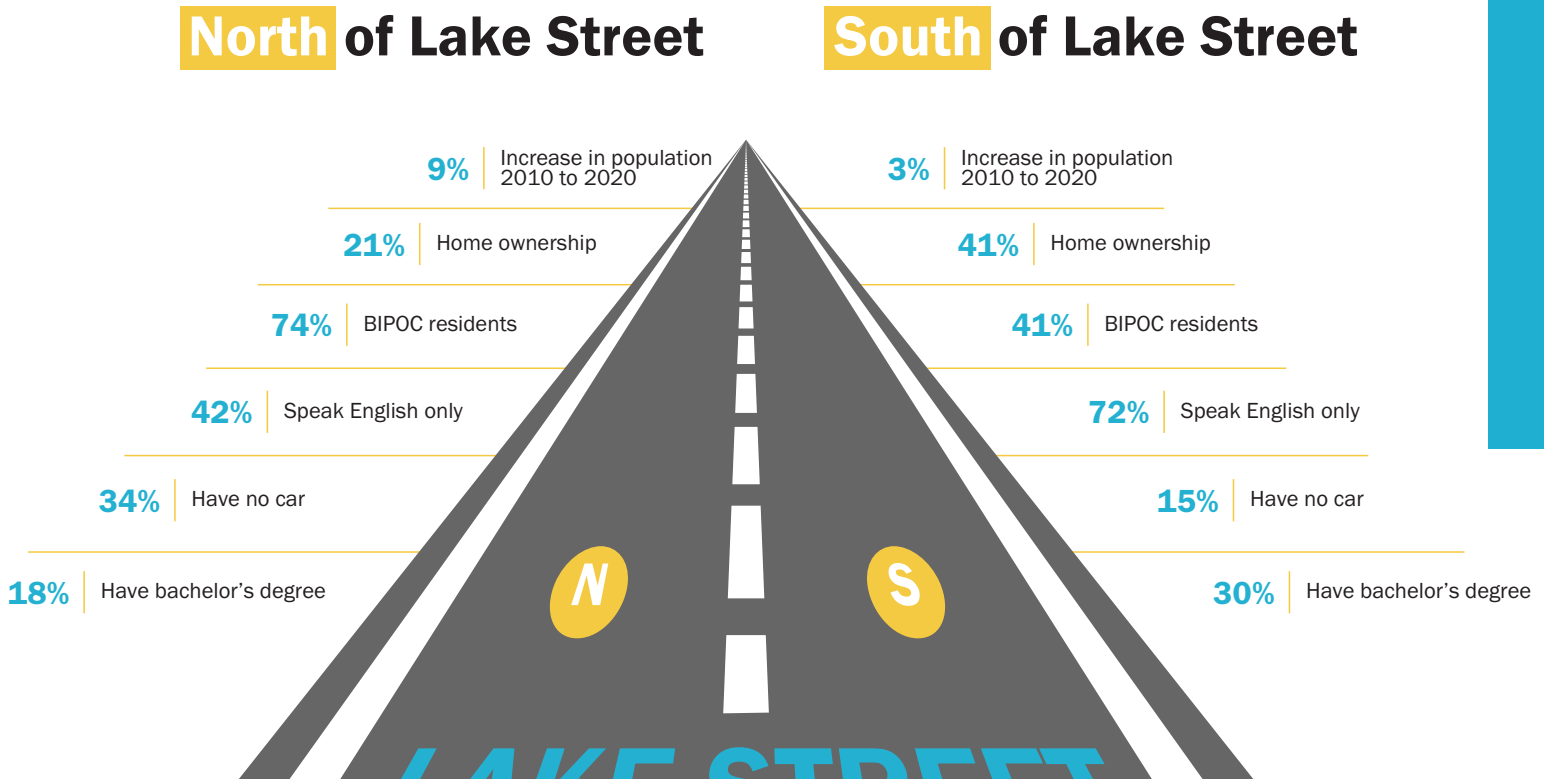
Demographic data for the analysis of the East Lake Cultural Corridor were compiled using Minnesota Compass 2016-2020 American Community Survey estimates adjusted to fit current neighborhood boundaries using 2020 Census counts.¹ Data for Compass’ Phillips and Powderhorn Communities most accurately represent the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor.

The total population for the corridor neighborhoods in 2020 was 78,131 which represents an addition of 3,333 residents, or a 4% increase from 2010. Growth was highest in the Phillips communities in the northeast quadrant of the corridor where the population increased by 9%. Powderhorn communities showed only a 3% increase in population. In general, the age in the corridor trends younger with over one-third of the population between the ages of 18 to 34 years. One-quarter of the population are under 18 and another one-quarter are between 35 and 54 years.

Residents identifying as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC) account for 56% of the total population, with 46% identifying as white, and 24% as Latinx. There are some differences in the communities with Phillips having a higher percentage of BIPOC residents than Powderhorn (74% vs. 41%). And in Phillips, 40% of BIPOC residents identify as Black versus 17% in Powderhorn. Phillips also has a larger percentage of Native American residents (4% vs. 1%) but both have similar Latinx identifying populations (27% and 21%).

East Lake Cultural Corridor Report

Population demographics



While 57% of residents in the corridor are English-only speakers, there are differences again, with 72% in Powderhorn speaking English only and 42% in Phillips. Likewise, while 28% of residents are foreign-born in the corridor, 36% are foreign born in Phillips and only 19% in Powderhorn. A high number (71%) of residents in the corridor moved to the area within the past 12 years, with only a small percentage aging in place – matching general age data where 15% of the population is 55-plus.

Of the 18-64 population, 77% are employed and 7% are unemployed. However, 39% earned less than \$35,000 annually – and 39% of households are considered cost burdened. Their shorter tenure in the community is similar to the citywide trend (moved in 2010 or later, 71% versus 66%). East Lake Street corridor residents differ with a higher percentage at the lower end of the household income scale (see chart).

	East Lake Street Cultural Corridor Neighborhoods	Minneapolis
< \$35,000	39%	28%
\$35 – \$49,999	15%	11%
\$50 – \$74,999	17%	16%
\$75 – \$ 99,999	12%	12%
\$100,000+	20%	32%

Of residents aged 25 or older, 24% do not have a high school degree (33% in Phillips versus 14% in Powderhorn) and 30% of Powderhorn residents have a college bachelor’s degree compared with 18% of Phillips residents. The national average for undergraduate degrees is 24% and graduate degrees is 14%, while Minneapolis on the whole ranks high in education with 32% having a bachelor’s degree.

Only 31% of corridor residents are homeowners and 62% are renters. Powderhorn’s rate of homeownership is 41%, versus 21% in Phillips. In Powderhorn, 53% are renters versus 71% in Phillips. Housing stock in the corridor neighborhoods trends older with 54% dated from 1939 or earlier. Household structure is similar in both communities where Family and Non-Family household types are about equally split. Of the Non-Family households, about 38% live alone.

One-quarter of households do not own a car (34% in Phillips versus 15% in Powderhorn). However, 63% of those who travel to work do so by car with 17% taking public transportation and 22% walking, biking, or working from home. Only a small percentage have a less than 10-minute commute (7%), while the remainder is equally split (about one-third each) between 10-to-19, 20-to-29, and 30-plus minutes.

In summary, the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor account for 18% of the city’s population, are more racially diverse (54% BIPOC versus 37% citywide). There are a higher percentage of immigrants (28% versus 15% citywide) and non-English speakers (43% versus 22% citywide). What stands out most are the differences from north to south. Phillips communities house a larger immigrant and Black population than the Powderhorn communities. They also demonstrate lower household incomes and ownership and a higher rate of cost burdened households.

ⁱ<https://www.mncompass.org/profiles/neighborhoods/minneapolis-saint-paul>, Phillips Communities: <https://www.mncompass.org/profiles/city/minneapolis/phillips>, Powderhorn Communities: <https://www.mncompass.org/profiles/city/minneapolis/powderhorn>

BUILDING ON RECENT PUBLIC INPUT AND PLANNING WORK

Following the May 2020 murder of George Floyd and subsequent uprisings, considerable thought and discussion have gone into the future planning of Lake Street, especially the area of East Lake Street designated to become a Cultural Corridor. Numerous stakeholders have carried out community engagement activities and other assessment and planning work. In September 2022, Twin Cities LISC and the Lake Street Council contracted Creative Community Builders (CCB) **to review this work to inform implementation and action strategies** and to devise a plan to guide the work of the Lake Street Greenway Partnership (LSGP), LISC, and the Lake Street Council in the development of an East Lake Street Cultural Corridor. CCB reviewed existing planning documents as described below. From this review, Guiding Values and Key Areas of Action were distilled.

Review Methods

Literature reviewed for this project brings into focus spatial, social, and economic concerns facing an East Lake Street Cultural Corridor. A range of strategic action plans, civic and community engagement tools, and land use analyses were reviewed to inform development and investment priorities and activities in the area. Beyond the central focus on East Lake Street and specific sites therein, the literature also explored other prominent cultural areas of Minneapolis to understand the broader ecosystem of creative and cultural development related to cultural corridors.

Most of the reports and studies reviewed were written in the prior two years, with the oldest source from 1999. Authors span government agencies, nonprofit partnerships, philanthropic institutions, landscape architects, and consulting firms, among others. In addition, a recently published collection of creative writing and visual art related to Lake Street was also reviewed to comprehend stories, beliefs, and experiences shared by individuals in the community who contribute to its cultural identity. Those assisting in this summary include Benjamin Alfaro, Miré Regulus, Mankwe Ndosí, and Tom Borrup. Leaders and members of the LSGP Arts and Culture Committee, among others, reviewed drafts.

Two key clusters of thinking were identified in the literature: (1) intangible considerations such as guiding principles, values, and ethics; and (2) considerations for physical actions such as concrete, structural, and organizational characteristics. Once sorted, findings were grouped by major themes to identify the essential values and actions expressed in the literature. **It is important to acknowledge that community input and planning work related to Lake Street below addressed Lake Street at large and not the more limited area addressed in this study.**

Literature Reviewed

- *American Indian Community Blueprint (NACDI, 2010)* – A development framework for asset-based and solution-oriented strategies designed to advance long-term American Indian interests and opportunities in South Minneapolis.
- *Arts Action Plan (Northeast Minneapolis, 2002)* – A strategic roadmap led by the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association to identify ways for sustainable support of artist communities in the thriving Minneapolis community.
- *Catalyzing Growth in Communities (Creative Businesses and Places, n.d.)* – An assessment of investment impacts spurred by creative entities that are conventionally under-recognized in the community development ecosystem.
- *Creative Placemaking Programming (LISC Twin Cities, 2021)* – A digital presentation prepared by Strong & Starlike Consulting, Inc. detailing findings and recommendations from a strategic planning scan of citywide placemaking activities.
- *Data Mapping in the Cultural Districts Report (LISC Twin Cities, 2021)* – A draft report to provide additional data within the Twin Cities' cultural districts and summarize the first phase of work that is relevant to community interests.
- *Development Vision to Action (LISC Twin Cities, 2021)* – An aspirational plan for specific support needed by businesses and property owners seeking to rebuild buildings following the summer of 2020.

- *Development Working Group (McKnight Foundation, n.d.)* – A summary of working group sessions focused on the Lake Street alignment process that convened community stakeholders to determine a common framework for supporting racial, economic, and environmental justice efforts.
- *Lake Street Recovery (Deloitte, 2020)* – An updated assessment of strategic directions for Lake Street’s arts and culture activities that expanded upon a previous Deloitte report with additional feedback from the field.
- *Lake Creates Summary and Reflection (Archetypical Women, 2021)* – A reflective summary prepared by Mankwe Ndosi & Miré Regulus detailing findings from community feedback from the Lake Creates public engagement process. The process focused on cross-sector relationships and connections between artists/creatives and non-arts businesses in the Lake Street corridor.
- *Lake Street Midtown Greenway Corridor Framework Plan (Close Landscape Architecture, Inc., 1999)* – An ‘implementation tool’ to heighten the discussion and strengthen the resolve of corridor stakeholders, working together to create a unique, memorable, safe, and sustainable model from which to build a stable, mixed-income community that works for everyone for decades to come.
- *Making the Connection (Hennepin County, 2016)* – A strategic plan exploring community feedback, recommendations, research, and data related to the advancement of the Midtown Greenway.
- *Placemaking and Activation (LISC Twin Cities, 2022)* – An overview of placemaking activities led by Lake Street Council and other partners with a focus on identifying key objectives, challenges, and a timeline of activities to date.
- *Strategic Development Plan (Thirty-Eighth Street Thrive, 2021)* – A community-led strategic development plan for the 38th Street Cultural District with an emphasis on vision alignment in response to the social and political unrest of 2020.
- *We Need Each Other (Pangea World Theater, 2022)* – A collection of essays, creative writing, interviews, and visual art reflecting on the impact and aftermath of the social and political unrest of 2020.

KEY GUIDING VALUES

Based on a review and analysis of the documents described above, Creative Community Builders derived the following:

1. **An empowered and active community with diverse involvement in civic activities and cultural practices.**
Supporting community members in navigating existing power structures and political influences is imperative to political empowerment and greater social, civic, and economic engagement. The inclusion of Lake Street’s remarkably diverse cultural, ethnic, religious, and social communities must be present in all decision-making processes. This requires building strong, long-term relationships among stakeholders, thus moving at ‘the speed of trust.’
2. **Healing and resilience in response to collective trauma and grief.**
Community-based and cultural events and actions as well as development practices that offer opportunities for businesses and residents to convene, reflect, and build solidarity are and will continue to be critical to collective healing. The impact of George Floyd’s murder by Minneapolis Police and the uprisings that devastated the Lake Street community deeply inform the approach to the area’s future planning and development efforts. This includes addressing historical trauma rooted in violence against, and theft of land from, Indigenous peoples; ongoing racism, particularly anti-Blackness; the legalized exclusion of immigrants from full rights of citizenship; and the trauma of small businesses that experienced violence and damage to their property and livelihoods.
3. **Racial and ethnic equity in employment, housing, wealth-building, and cultural expression.**
The advancement of Lake Street residents and businesses who have been historically excluded from opportunities to grow their economic self-sufficiency must be supported in ways that intentionally reduce disparities. This includes housing, business and property ownership, and access to spaces to create and gather. For artists and culture bearers, this includes tangible investments in culturally specific art forms and traditions.

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- 3. Racial and ethnic equity in employment, housing, wealth-building, and cultural expression.**
The advancement of Lake Street residents and businesses who have been historically excluded from opportunities to grow their economic self-sufficiency must be supported in ways that intentionally reduce disparities. This includes housing, business and property ownership, and access to spaces to create and gather. For artists and culture bearers, this includes tangible investments in culturally specific art forms and traditions.
- 4. Shared visions for collective action from diverse community stakeholders to shape East Lake Street's future.**
Central to the development of East Lake Street moving forward are the beliefs, aspirations, and lived experiences of all residents, businesses, and cultural communities, particularly those most vulnerable to the pressures of disinvestment and displacement. This includes ongoing efforts to welcome, listen, and bring people and their ideas together.
- 5. Physical and perceived safety.**
A corridor with robust cultural and creative activity, and well-maintained public spaces, supports safety by providing greater visibility of community spaces that positively influence resident, business owner/worker, and visitor experiences. This requires recognition that people with different life experiences perceive safety in distinctly different ways. For example, state-sanctioned violence and/or exploitation by profit-driven entities weigh heavily on some, while others benefit from such forces. All agree that everyone deserves to feel and be safe, and achieving that goal will help East Lake Street.
- 6. Celebration, preservation, and health of artists, culture bearers, and creative and cultural heritages.**
By honoring community traditions and understanding the historical context of those who live and work on or near East Lake Street, development efforts should support the long-term preservation, advancement, and celebration of residents' cultures and livelihoods. Artists, creative entrepreneurs, and small businesses generate connective social fabric and new economic activity, which contributes to a healthier community.
- 7. Collaboration across diverse sectors, generations, and cultures.**
Increasing connectivity between community stakeholders strengthens the impact of development efforts and local partnerships while bridging silos and weaving stronger social and civic fabric. Groups historically excluded from past planning processes, like those without formal business affiliations, young people, and elders, should be foregrounded in decision-making.

KEY AREAS FOR ACTION

Development and sustainability of a vital and vibrant cultural corridor on East Lake Street will require:

1. **Accessible, proactive, and responsive public and private funding options, technical assistance, and marketplaces for BIPOC artists, entrepreneurs, and small businesses.**

Advocacy for more inclusive tools to secure and navigate funding and financing opportunities is needed to address gaps in the existing landscape. More easily navigable pathways and proactive assistance are needed for creative entrepreneurs and small business people with experience and wisdom on the ground but no formal business training. Creative enterprises and artists are typically not recognized as commercially valid or economically productive endeavors. Thus, identifying pathways to funding and financial viability for such entrepreneurs can be a challenge. Support should include targeted workforce development, property ownership, and apprenticeship opportunities for small businesses, creative entrepreneurs, and culturally based nonprofits.

2. **Prominent, flexible gathering spaces for cultural, community, religious activity.**

A vibrant East Lake Street Cultural Corridor requires welcoming, publicly accessible, and people-centered community spaces where communities come together. Gathering spaces should be flexible in the number of locations, accessibility, and capacity to promote community interaction.

3. **Affordable housing and rental studio space for artists and arts organizations.**

The economic fallout stemming from the pandemic was especially precarious for the creative sector, accelerating displacement concerns for artists, arts organizations, and culturally based small entrepreneurs. Affordable housing, studio, and start-up space options along the corridor are essential for sustaining creative and cultural vitality.

4. **Sense of cultural vibrancy, connection to place, and broader visibility.**

Easily recognizable and place-based creative and cultural activities can honor and amplify traditions and new creative expressions. Landmarks, active public spaces, festivals, and ongoing creative and cultural events reflective of distinct East Lake Street communities promote safety and supports sustainability. Developing a cohesive sense of identity rooted in one or more of the major cultural groups residing in the corridor remains both a challenge and opportunity.

5. **Accessible infrastructure that prioritizes pedestrians, cyclists, and public transportation.**

Strategies that are bike- and pedestrian-friendly can increase commercial activity and strengthen neighborhood cohesion and safety. Wayfinding encourages pedestrians and cyclists to understand their proximity to East Lake Street's business areas, services, and access to public transportation. Activated spaces, retail, and ongoing activities foster walkability, reduce the use of private cars, and increase community interaction.

6. **Aligned public development resources and zoning policies for creative and cultural spaces and enterprises.**

Policy and zoning shifts have contributed to displacement on East Lake and influenced risk factors like high rental and low ownership rates for businesses, residents, and nonprofits. Development should ensure that zoning and code enforcements are equitable and supportive of creative and cultural uses that fuel creative thinking, micro-, start-up, and home-based enterprises. Clarity between political and administrative jurisdictions is important.

7. **Community capacity for coalition-building that sustains economic, civic, and cultural vitality.**

Existing power structures deflect and minimize community participation. By breaking conventional silos of on-the-ground ideas, influences, and power, broader coalitions can foster a shared sense of support and ownership of future outcomes.

Understanding the Creative Sector/Creative Economy in Minneapolis

In evidence from surveys and interviews for this study is a lack of understanding of the broader ‘creative economy’ and ‘creative sector.’ These are economic constructs evolving since the 1980s. The creative sector demonstrates inordinate impacts because of its reverberating nature. It sparks innovation in all sectors, and it has social and educational impacts.

The US Bureau of Economic Analysis defines the broad reach of the ‘creative economy’ in terms of both core and supporting industries. Core includes arts and cultural production industries that are originators of ideas and content associated with the formation of new creative products and ideas. Supporting industries produce and disseminate creative and cultural commodities. By including these supporting industries, the impact that creativity has on the economy is better reflected. The core category includes performing arts, museums, design services, and arts education. The supporting category consists of the activities that advance the core category through publication and dissemination of the creative process. For example, it includes event promotion, printing, and broadcasting. [For more information on the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, including an overview, concepts, and methodology, see: [U.S. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, 1998–2012.](#)]

There are 72 industries and 54 job types in Minneapolis that are considered ‘creative’ according to the City of Minneapolis’ office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy (refer to MCI, 2018 <https://www.minneapoliscreates.org/research>). This economic sector ranges from art dealers to advertising agencies, and from architects to musicians and graphic designers – industries and job types that share a cultural focus and creative skill sets. As of 2018, the City of Minneapolis identified and mapped 3,467 for-profit and nonprofit creative enterprises within the city that occupy 1,242 buildings as commercial tenants and/or owners.

East Lake Cultural Corridor Report

Minneapolis Creative Economy



72

Creative industry categories



54

Creative job types



3,467

For-profit and nonprofit creative enterprises

For-profit creative sector

accounts for just under \$5 billion in revenues from 2011 to 2018

Combined for-profit and nonprofits

account for \$5.5 billion in revenues from 2011 to 2018

There are 72 industries and 54 job types in Minneapolis that are considered ‘creative’ according to the City of Minneapolis’ office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy (refer to MCI, 2018 <https://www.minneapoliscreates.org/research>). This economic sector ranges from art dealers to advertising agencies, and from architects to musicians and graphic designers – industries and job types that share a cultural focus and creative skill sets. As of 2018, the City of Minneapolis identified and mapped 3,467 for-profit and nonprofit creative enterprises within the city that occupy 1,242 buildings as commercial tenants and/or owners.

From a street-level economic standpoint, one way to consider the creative sector is as both a revenue- and workforce-generating industry; a second is in the benefits it brings to other non-creative businesses. For instance, creative sector actions, such as a festival, will drive economic activity in nearby non-creative businesses. Minnesota Citizens for the Arts estimates that arts and cultural audience members spent at least \$30 over and above the event price at local restaurants and bars in conjunction with nonprofit arts events in 2019. This aggregates to a \$594 million impact on the state’s economy.

On its own, the for-profit creative sector generated close to \$5 billion in revenues annually since 2011 in the city of Minneapolis. Combined with nonprofit arts and cultural revenues, the sector generated close to \$5.5 billion in 2018 alone accounting for nearly 26,000 jobs. Statewide, for-profit creative industry revenues were over \$21.6 billion and accounted for close to 121,000 jobs. Advertising, publishing, architecture, design, and media production and distribution top the list of revenue producers in the city. Advertising alone generated over \$1.3 billion in revenues. Cultural education and performing arts each contributed over \$200 million in 2018 in this diverse sector.

Mapping Creative and Cultural Assets in East Lake

For purposes of this study an interactive digital asset map was produced by Urbane DrK Consulting and mapping technicians at the University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). Types of entities and locations represented on the map included:

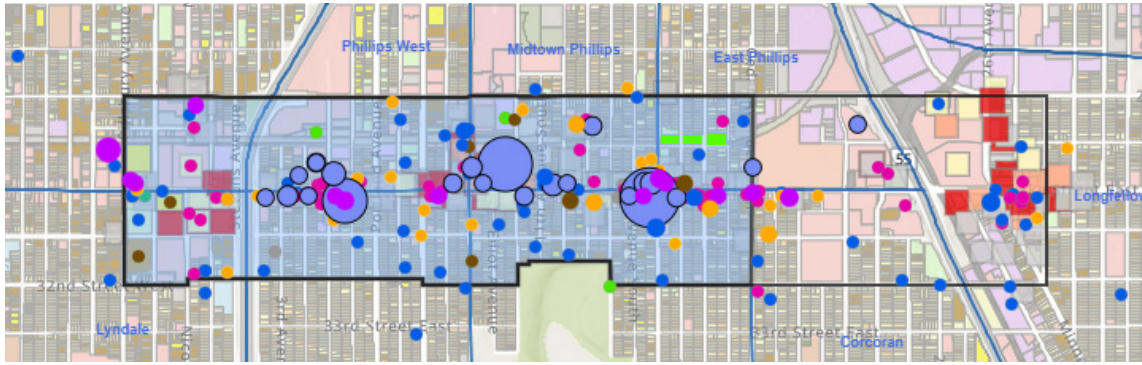
Cultural Education	Education reflecting on cultural heritage. Learning about beliefs and practices specific to a cultural group and how these ways of being impart belonging.
Green Spaces	Spaces that foster a reconnection to the land/earth; to recreate, relax, reflect, till, and protect.
Landmarks	Physical representation of the neighborhood’s cultural heritage such as public art and architecture (historic preservation).
Food Enterprises	Small businesses and food entrepreneurs that serve culturally specific and artisan niche markets such as small locally owned groceries and small batch bakeries or brewers.
Cultural Significance	Places, spaces, or people that foster cultural significance in everyday life such as a religious, cultural and culturally specific business organization.
Resources	Service providers and supporters

Also included were:

- Damaged or destroyed buildings
- 10 creative enterprise categories (combined into larger dots based on counts)
- 6 cultural asset categories (combined into larger dots based on counts)
- Legend
- Land use layer

The map can be found at this URL.

<https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=58762c70a1c64393934e28cdea054e45&extent=-93.3156,44.9242,-93.2021,44.9702>

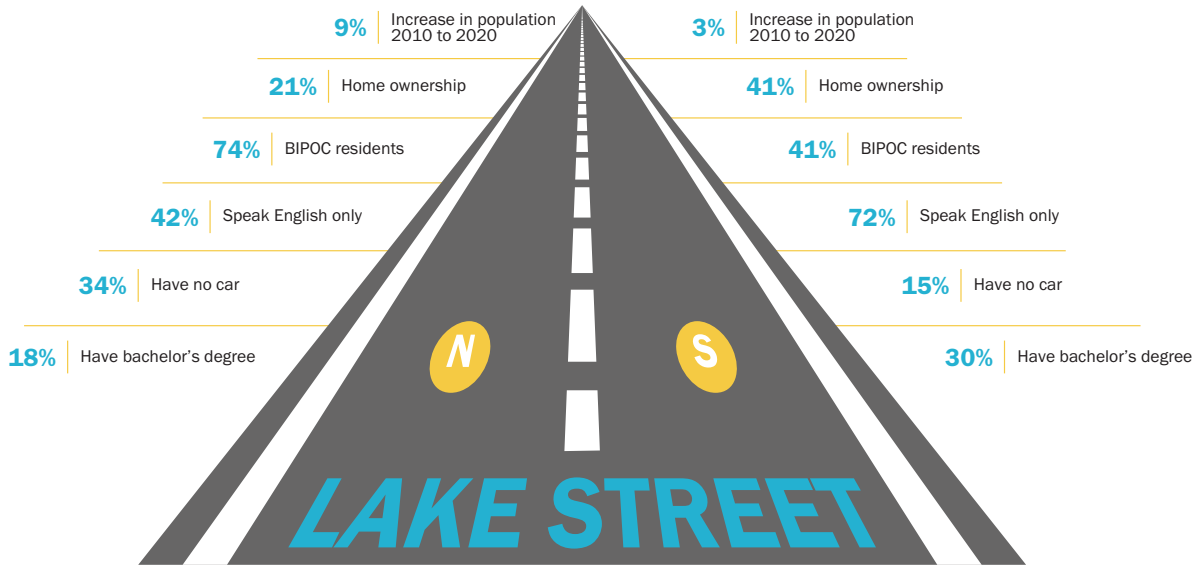


East Lake Cultural Corridor Report

Population demographics

North of Lake Street

South of Lake Street



Key East Lake Stakeholders Weigh In

Creative Community Builders drew information to inform recommendations from two major sources. The first was interviews with key cultural activists, those organizations both nonprofit and for-profit that have generated public events and activities on East Lake Street during recent years. The second was an online survey of members of the Lake Street Greenway Partnership. Below are summaries of findings from each of those sources and a discussion of some noticeable differences between them.



Photo by Tom Borrup

Findings from Interviews with Key Cultural Activators

Over twenty were invited and a total of 18 community-based organizations and leaders on East Lake participated in informal conversations to help define priorities and needs for their future work on the corridor. These organizations are based in the performing arts, education, community development, retail, and literary fields. Ranging from emerging neighborhood collectives to established business ventures and nonprofits, these participating organizations are responsible for many of the creative and cultural events and activities on and around Lake Street as well as ongoing retail activities and public space activation.

Participating organizations included Barebones Productions, CaMinO, Confluence Studio, Division of Indian Work, Friends of Global Market, Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery, Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge, In the Heart of the Beast, Ingebretsen's Scandinavian Gifts & Foods, Latino Economic Development Center, Latino Museum of Minnesota, League of Longfellow Artists, MIGZI, Midtown Greenway Coalition, Moon Palace Books, Quatrefoil Library, and Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts. A conversation with David O'Fallon, former President and CEO of the Minnesota Humanities Center, was also held to learn about emerging arts and cultural initiatives located on Lake Street. In addition to the key cultural assets, included above, other prominent organizations that were unable to participate in conversations as of this writing, but are essential stakeholders for future planning efforts, include: CLUES, Holy Trinity Church, Pangea World Theater, and the Somali Museum of Minnesota, among others.

Approximately half of the participating organizations were founded before the year 2000, with several emerging on the corridor between the 1950s and 1980s. The locations of these organizations are clustered near Lake and Minnehaha in the Longfellow neighborhood and along Lake Street between Chicago and Cedar. One organization is located near 29th Street and 5th Avenue, while another is near 28th Street and 15th Avenue, and a third is located near the Midtown Greenway on 10th Avenue. Three organizations do not have a fixed location on Lake Street.

Operations and organizational capacity vary, as some participating organizations function with limited or no paid staff and rely on a strong core of volunteer supporters, while others operate with robust staffing structures. Operating budgets spanned approximately \$50,000 to \$3,000,000. For the organizations that currently own and operate their buildings, numerous challenges were identified for the existing facility spaces, including renovations, new development opportunities, or other capital-related needs.

Facility concerns were amplified by the damage stemming from the 2020 uprising following the murder of George Floyd, which caused significant expenses for these organizations to absorb. Recovery efforts are mixed, with many navigating a successful rebound while others continue to struggle with a full recovery. Collectively, the participating organizations identified at least \$5,500,000 in immediate and future capital needs to advance their core operations and sustain programming. An additional \$5,000,000 is anticipated for future cultural facility development. Corridor-wide, a minimum of \$100,000,000 in investment needs were identified to move Lake Street forward as a hub of commercial and cultural vitality. Lastly, interviews revealed a need for at least \$25,000,000 for business development on the corridor to drive self-sustainability, community programming activities, and support-services operations.

Among those interviewed, nine major themes and guiding considerations resonated most. These themes include:

1. Corridor Activation and Design

- **Event Coordination:** Most conversations touched on the benefits of both large- and small-scale community events as recurring or pop-up models. Open Streets and May Day were identified as successful large-scale events; however, several of the organizations interviewed actively host events of significant size that serve the Lake Street community. Organic partnerships between organizations have been critical in launching and sustaining these efforts. Coordination with city permitting requirements was viewed as relatively complex, and a desire for a more coordinated process and support is apparent. In addition, several organizations voiced frustration with certain culturally based events having been relocated and conducted in ways to advance real estate development rather than authentic, community-rooted cultural celebrations.
- **Corridor Marketing:** While safety issues continue to be a challenge for Lake Street, most of those interviewed described the inflated perception of the corridor as an unsafe place. This represents the biggest deterrent for customers and visitors. Advertising and tourism marketing were recognized as necessary areas of investment, showcasing the abundance of shopping, dining, and recreational activities. Nicollet Avenue's "Eat Street" was cited as a cohesive marketing model, and Lake Street is recognized for sharing many of the same characteristics. Organizations working in the arts emphasized the role of visual marketing in attracting visitors, such as mosaics and creative updates to signage and other utility structures.

- **Human Services:** When considering what major investments or development is needed for the vitality of Lake Street, many conversations focused on the requisite need to develop comprehensive tools in support of unhoused individuals and those facing challenges with substance use. Specifically, prioritizing community-focused safety tactics outweighed the reliance on police intervention to manage encampments and other similar issues. Meeting the basic needs of neighbors on the corridor resonated as a more urgent concern than any particular capital development for those interviewed.

2. Physical Realm

- **Third Precinct Site:** Widely viewed as the most blighted area of concern for the corridor by those interviewed is the vacant and barricaded Third Precinct police station. Particularly, organizations clustered around the intersection of Minnehaha and Lake were most vocal about the need for the site to be renovated and repurposed into a new, multi-use space for community-building and healing. For example, the site would lend itself well to a shared facility for programming or a venue for community events. Overall, the perceived lack of transparent and proactive action by local officials regarding the site after more than two years has conveyed a sense of deep frustration and abandonment from creative and cultural leaders on Lake Street.
- **Parking and Accessibility:** Pedestrian-friendly and more organized parking options are seen as key needs to balance the car-oriented nature of the corridor. Areas of consideration that emerged include parking options for family-friendly events, stemming from past safety concerns when leaving evening programs, and shared parking spaces that can be renovated for community use, such as the Third Precinct lot. There were also challenges related to limited on-street parking, which can be a deterrent to accessing businesses and other venues along the corridor.
- **Shared Venue Spaces:** Many organizations without permanent facilities have utilized rental spaces, public plazas, and temporary venues. However, an emerging vision for a collaborative and shared facility that could accommodate multiple organizations in their creative and cultural pursuits is desired. The field was mixed on the role of Avalon Theater as one possible option, while others suggested the Third Precinct site as a prospective location for future development. Two organizations expressed the specific need for a commercial kitchen, which may be a beneficial component of prospective shared community spaces.

3. Capacity Building

- **Cultural Diversity:** Nearly all conversations identified Lake Street's multitude of cultures as the top defining asset. Even for organizations with culturally specific audiences and consumers, their focused community needs were viewed as a subset of the broader needs of the wide range of cultures represented. These reflections inform efforts to develop a brand strategy that is inclusive of the many cultures present versus singling out any particular group. Some feedback revealed that East Lake Street's designation as a Latinx-specific area might be appropriate for a subsection of the wider area (e.g., "Calle Lake" as part of Lake Street's broader identity). However, there would likely be push-back to overlaying that description for the entirety of the corridor. In contrast, the predominantly white-led nonprofit leadership structure for many organizations was also identified as a challenge due to the perceived centering of "whiteness" in decision-making and preservation of the status quo in development.
- **Nonprofit Leadership:** Organizations that self-identified as predominantly white-led were the most vocal about advancing regional nonprofit leadership that reflects the diversity of the Lake Street community. Notably, some organizations that have actively navigated these structural changes in the recent past expressed an interest in supporting peer groups that feel under-resourced or concerned about moving forward with operational goals linked to equity and inclusion.
- **Technical Assistance:** Given limited staff capacity for many of the organizations interviewed, accessing available and prospective philanthropic resources has proven to be a complex pursuit. Many organizations expressed the need for greater technical assistance in locating and soliciting support. For small and emerging organizations that have recently secured nonprofit status, grants and other resources were essentially inaccessible before incorporation. However, after gaining 501(c)(3) status, grant-seeking felt equally restrictive, especially given the resources needed to be competitive and the inherent reliance of grant writing in the English language. Alternately, organizations with established or experienced fundraising leadership have been relatively successful in stewarding new funding for major projects and operating support.

Findings from a Survey of Lake Street Greenway Partnership Members

Lake Street Greenway Partnership: Findings from Survey of Members

First formed in 1998 as Midtown Community Works (MCW), this partnership brings together public, private, and nonprofit or voluntary sector players with interest and investment in Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway. MCW concluded its efforts in 2017, having realized the Midtown Greenway and the Midtown Exchange with location of the Allina headquarters and Midtown Global Market, among other achievements. Within a few years, and after the murder of George Floyd, it was clear that a renewed effort was needed and the base of support expanded. Coordinating efforts between the City and County as well as corporations adjacent to Lake Street including Wells Fargo Mortgage, Allina Health, Ryan Companies, and others in addition to philanthropic entities and nonprofits such as Division of Indian Works, Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES), Lake Street Council, and others. In 2021, the group was formally reconstituted under the banner Lake Street Greenway Partnership with about 40 members. At its formation, the membership adopted this charge:

*The Partnership will base its activities for Lake Street recovery and investment on plans that center the unique cultural makeup and economic needs of the corridor. The plans should seek to stabilize the corridor and fill the gaps identified by community, taking special care to prioritize the input and guidance of the immigrant owned businesses, cultural leaders, workers, and organizations headquartered on Lake Street that reflect the collective wisdom of our vibrant immigrant and BIPOC communities who are core to Lake Street and the city's economic health, vitality, and vibrancy; such efforts include a community coalition of place-based partners committed to supporting the cultural and economic recovery of East Lake Street, the Greenway, and will seek to integrate the voices of the Lake Street Reconstruction Coalition, the expertise of immigrant and BIPOC artists with deep roots on Lake Street, and build community capacity to reach the goals of the Minneapolis Forward Community Now Coalition; this commitment to a community-based vision will also align with the City of Minneapolis' Cultural Districts Policy and the designation of Lake Street as a Cultural District, which will allow for the **creation and prioritized implementation of new investment tools, policies, and practices that center arts and culture as a community revitalization strategy to stop and prevent the displacement of low-income residents and communities of color.***

Twenty members of the Lake Street Greenway Partnership responded to an online survey during November and December 2022. The survey was designed to provide actionable information on attitudes, perceptions, and future visions for East Lake Street. One-half of respondents identified as providers of services or cultural activities to residents and visitors, and 40% currently operate a business/nonprofit and/or provide services and cultural activities on East Lake Street. Thus, a small majority have less of a day-to-day relationship with Lake Street. They own property or work in government or public policy, finance, or other institutions.

All respondents identified having at least some knowledge of the City of Minneapolis Cultural Corridor Program as laid out in the 2040 Plan, with 70% claiming moderate to high familiarity. Two respondents considered themselves very familiar with the plan. No strong sense of identity or purpose for a cultural corridor emerged, and only a few survey questions garnered a majority of high rankings.

The greatest areas of agreement were in the desire to see more public and private investment and to make specific investments that generate cultural vibrancy and that provide funding, technical assistance, and marketplaces for artists and entrepreneurs. Half of the respondents supported activation of public spaces and capacity building for coalitions to sustain economic vitality. In general, however, there were lower levels of agreement on identity, strategies, and priority investments.

Areas where there was alignment on the lowest priorities included marketing for creative and cultural activities, along with housing and studio space for artists and cultural organizations, and investments in gathering spaces for cultural activities. Investments in coordination for events and festivals, marketing to promote culturally based businesses, and permanent spaces for museums and performances were also in the lowest tier of priorities.

In terms of vision for the corridor, there was also little consensus with only slight movement from it being seen in the past as a transportation corridor to a future place of gathering for cultural activities. Also, there was slight movement away from the corridor serving as a shopping and service area for Latinx and Somali communities towards a place for festivals and events. No characterization garnered a majority. In fact, 35% was the largest cluster of agreement in terms of corridor purpose and identity.

As strategies, large capital investments topped the list with small capital investments in the public realm and capacity-building for arts and cultural organizations in a tied position for second. Support for artists and coordination of events, respectively, were seen as the least effective strategies.

Additional considerations for investment included efforts to improve public safety and the social service infrastructure. There is a perception that East Lake Street is not a safe place to visit or operate a business. Crime or fear of crime was cited by several respondents. While this has been an ongoing challenge for Lake Street for at least the past half-century, an uptick has been experienced during the past two years.

Detail of Survey Results

1. **Corridor Activation and Design**

- **Purpose and character – Present day:** Asked to characterize East Lake Street in the present-day, respondents had diverse thoughts. Some 30% felt that East Lake Street's primary role is best characterized as a business service area for Southside Minneapolis, 25% characterized it as a transportation corridor, and 20% as a service area for nearby residents. In comparison, 35% felt its secondary role is best characterized as a shopping area for Latinx and Somali communities, suggesting it has a sense of ethnic related identity or purpose – although not a strong one. No respondents ranked the function of East Lake Street as a place to gather for social or family activities, and only 10% ranked it in second place for characterization as a place of festivals and community events.
- **Purpose and character – Future:** Some of the more interesting results surfaced in the differences between present-day and future characterizations. A place of gathering ranked lowest (0%) in the present-day, while 35% ranked gathering in their top two priorities for the future. A similar increase was seen in the corridor as a place of festivals and events. Those wanting to see it as a place of cultural activity moved from 25 to 40%. This indicates a trend but does not represent a widely shared vision. Accordingly, the percentage who would like to see it as a business and service area decreased, but not significantly. Those considering it as a shopping area for Latinx and Somali communities also declined in priority.
- **Desired products, services, and events:** Respondents felt these elements are currently missing or would like to see on East Lake Street: (Note: these were singularly listed by individuals)
 - Community ambassadors to guide visitors and provide a safe presence
 - Recurring large events that celebrate the neighborhood and its cultures
 - Tangible employment opportunities for residents along the corridor
 - Neighborhood communications via newsletters and business promotions
 - Grocery options, pharmacies, and coffee shops
 - Outdoor dining options and healthy drive-through restaurants
 - Cultural and artistic edifices and murals serving Latinx and Somali communities
 - Community gathering spaces with easy parking options
- **Priority investments and strategies:** When asked to rank areas of priority investment, there was a higher level of agreement. The largest number (65%) felt cultural vibrancy was the most important. For strategies to realize a vibrant corridor, the most highly rated action indicated by 50% is to stimulate ongoing city and philanthropic investment in cultural activities and organizations. Activated spaces were also selected by 50%. No one ranked marketing campaigns that emphasize creative and cultural activities as a top priority. In fact, 50% ranked cultural marketing as their lowest priority.

2. **Physical Infrastructure**

- **Capital investments:** Regarding the greatest strategic impact on East Lake Street, respondents strongly felt that large capital investments were more impactful (70% first and second ranking combined). However, investments in cultural facilities ranked very low, so the assumption is that investments are in business properties or the public realm. Small capital investments in the public infrastructure were the next most impactful and 45% would prioritize accessible mobility infrastructure.
- **Specific missing elements:** Physical infrastructure that respondents felt is currently missing from East Lake Street include: (Note: these were singularly listed by individuals)
 - Wayfinding, lighting, consistent signage, and better connections to the Greenway
 - Murals to reflect and represent the many cultures of the corridor

- Performance venues, walking tours, and family-friendly gathering areas
 - Green spaces, wider sidewalks, and investment in Cepro Park
 - Bike racks and traffic controls that increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Greater opportunities for home ownership along the corridor
 - Outdoor spaces designed for music, dining, and events
 - Trees, plants, flowers, and increased green space with gathering areas
 - A new or rebuilt building on the 3rd Precinct site with a dedicated social service function
 - Dedicated spaces for community gathering and culturally specific centers
- Other needed activities or programs: Specific projects, organizations, and improvements that individual respondents felt would impact East Lake Street include: (Note: these were singularly listed by individuals)
 - Filling vacancies that support a functional economic corridor
 - Prioritization of small businesses destroyed during the uprising
 - Public safety programs that increase the presence of security (e.g., LEAD)
 - Culturally specific and place-based museums, theaters, and community centers
 - Projects that create opportunities for BIPOC communities to own property
 - Greater density of services, retail, and groceries
 - Political and systematic support for the Somali Museum and Latino Museum

3. Capacity Building

- A relatively high number, or 60%, prioritized funding, technical assistance, and marketplaces for artists and entrepreneurs. Also, 50% of respondents felt building capacity for coalitions to sustain economic vitality was important. Capacity building for arts and cultural organizations were the next most impactful strategy with 45% first and second rankings combined.
- Only 30% prioritized public policy in support of cultural and creative enterprises. Tied for the lowest priority at 15% were (1) housing and studio space for artists and cultural organizations and (2) investment in gathering spaces for cultural activities. In fact, investment in gathering spaces had the most unfavorable rankings among all responses.
- Supporting artists, culture bearers, and makers, as well as the coordination of large and periodic events, had no first-priority rankings, with 25% and 15% ranking it as a second priority, respectively. Support for artists had the lowest rankings. These results appear inconsistent with the desires expressed (above and below) to create vibrancy and activate public spaces. Alternatively, they may indicate a belief that artists come from outside the community to activate spaces and bring vibrancy or simply that it's not the community's responsibility.
- Only 25% felt that permanent museum/exhibition spaces and permanent performance spaces are important, with a greater number (45%) ranking performance spaces as their lowest priority. A high-functioning consortium or coalition of cultural organizations received only 20% first or second priority rankings (and no third priorities), with 20% choosing it as the lowest priority and 35% neutral. Only 25% felt that marketing campaigns to promote culturally based

Findings present some contradictions. There is high value placed on cultural vibrancy, yet little interest to invest in gathering places, events and festivals, event coordination, or marketing. There's a strong belief in the need for large capital investments yet investing in permanent presenting spaces for arts and culture was ranked lowest.

East Lake Cultural Corridor Report

Comparative Priorities



Priorities of Cultural Activators

Top Tier

- ▶ Highlighting and celebrating cultural diversity
- ▶ Coordination and support for special events, festivals
- ▶ Marketing for events, organizations, and culturally based businesses
- ▶ Shared venues for performances, events, activities
- ▶ Capacity development among arts/cultural organizations

Second Tier

- ▶ Support for human services and people in distress
- ▶ Re-purposing the Third Precinct building
- ▶ Parking and accessibility



Priorities of Lake Street Greenway Partnership Members

Top Tier

- ▶ Sense of cultural vibrancy, connection to place, and broadened visibility
- ▶ Funding, technical assistance, and marketplaces for BIPOC artists and entrepreneurs
- ▶ Ongoing city and philanthropic investment in cultural activities and organizations
- ▶ Activated public spaces and periodic, regular festivals or street events
- ▶ High functioning coalition of business and cultural organizations
- ▶ Capacity development among arts/cultural organizations

Second Tier

- ▶ Prominent and flexible gathering places for cultural and religious activities
- ▶ Affordable housing and studio space for artists and arts organizations
- ▶ Permanent museum, gallery, or performance spaces
- ▶ Marketing for events, organizations, and culturally based businesses
- ▶ Supporting culture bearers, artists, makers

Discussion of Comparative Results

Findings from both the survey of LSGP members and interviews with cultural activators emphasized the need and desire to generate cultural vibrancy, to activate an East Lake Cultural Corridor, and for it to be a safer environment. A consistently cited priority was investment of significant amounts of financial resources. Beyond those, there was little agreement on priorities or strategies. Marketing and coordination for events in the Corridor were highest on the list for the cultural activators and lowest on the list of priorities for LSGP members. Whether this represents a difference of opinion on strategies or in the sequencing of resource allocation is not known.

Other areas of divergence included the need for permanent spaces for cultural and social activities both in buildings and in outdoor spaces. This was high for the cultural activators and low for the LSGP members. While the desire for cultural vibrancy was high for LSGP members, supporting gathering places, event coordination, marketing, and support for artists and the creative sector was low.

A variety of areas in which the different stakeholder groups saw either dissimilar priorities or separate strategies represent a call for more dialog and mutual learning. Both hold a commitment and passion for the future of the Corridor but don't appear to share visions for ways of achieving it. Does a greater sense of safety need to be created before more events are held and more commerce follows, or do more events and more commerce create greater safety both real and perceived? Are artful lighting and wayfinding a frill or "nice-to-have" or are they essential to an environment that attracts more foot traffic and more local commerce?

High-functioning physical infrastructure is critical, as is energetic street life. Which comes first? Recommended actions that follow address building on such dialogs and the capacities to work together as well as investments in the built environment and activation strategies. Moving forward in this report, discussion related to these deviations in approaches is among the areas where work is clearly needed.

Recommendations

Based on mapping, survey results, interviews, knowledge of cultural corridors, and consultation with leadership of LSGP, LISC, and LSC, Creative Community Builders (CCB) developed a set of recommendations for forward action to address challenges and opportunities identified. These are organized in three categories: (1) Activation & Design, (2) Physical Realm, and (3) Capacity & Policy. In sum, these actions are designed to move Lake Street stakeholders to shape an environment in which a vibrant, safe, economically just, and sustainable cultural corridor can be best achieved. In conformance with the City of Minneapolis Cultural Corridor Program the overall strategy built into these actions remains to:

Strengthen neighborhoods by prioritizing and accelerating economic development, public transit, and affordable housing policies, practices, and resources to protect the racial diversity and uplift the cultural identity of the city's areas where a significant portion of the population is comprised of people of color, Indigenous people, and/or immigrant communities

Activation and Design

I. Maintain and Expand Public Art Projects and Events

Rationale: Visible evidence of activity, change, and improvement build support, maintain optimism, and stimulate additional small- and large-scale investment by businesses, property owners, government, and residents. Increased numbers of people on the street contribute to a safer environment as well as to feelings of safety. This, in turn, generates greater commercial, social, and cultural activity.

Findings: Lake Street Council launched expanded public art and placemaking efforts in the aftermath of the 2020 uprisings contributing dozens of murals and small-scale, visible improvements on Lake Street and the Greenway. The City Department of Cultural Affairs and private groups such as the Graves Foundation commissioned multiple public art projects and events. Spearheaded by various groups, events such as the Taco Tour, May Day, Open Streets, Cinco de Mayo, the Greenway Glow Festival, Dia de los Muertos, events by Pangea World Theater, and others, provide excellent activities to build on. Other space activation projects led by individual artists and arts groups have activated vacant lots and public spaces across the Corridor.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Continue and expand public art and celebratory activities on Lake Street and the Greenway through LSC and other partners.
- 2.) Support LSC projects that may evolve into managing and maintenance of murals as well as commissioning of new work.
- 3.) Fund events, event coordination, and event marketing beginning through Lake Street Council and evolving to an East Lake Cultural Network (See Alignment and Coordination of Cultural Activators) with five-year, \$2,000,000 fund for staff coordination, event support, and promotion.
- 4.) Activate more arts and cultural organizations through creative placemaking projects. (See Recommendation III.)

II. Promote Active Street Life with Food Trucks and Sidewalk Vending

Rationale: The presence of food trucks, street vendors, outdoor seating, animated storefronts, creative lighting, and pedestrian activity generate a lively atmosphere and sense of place stewardship. Street trees and public space amenities including benches, bike racks, and plantings at ground level and on light poles enliven spaces and make them more welcoming. Eyes and feet on the street along with business activity with vested entrepreneurs create a safer environment. Foods that are representative of the cultures of Lake Street contribute to its sense of identity as a cultural space.

Findings: Several food trucks and trailers have occupied a stretch of Lake Street between 12th Avenue and 21st Avenue for many years, as well as in the parking lot of the former Kmart at Blaisdell, with most operating through the winter months. Lake Street is very much an “eat street” and can become more so. Street trees on most of Lake Street are sad. When planted new, they are often too young to survive in harsh urban conditions. Welcoming amenities such as seating are often not provided for fear of attracting the unhoused.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Work with the City to relax policies allowing street food vendors, sidewalk seating.
- 2.) Upgrade street tree and flower planting and maintenance programs.

- 3.) Encourage businesses of all types to conduct some aspect of their business on sidewalks as conditions permit – from sandwich boards, to giving haircuts, to serving ice cream – which could include window service where possible.
- 4.) Consider organizing a food truck festival or periodic food truck events.
- 5.) Work with LSC, the City, and others to support or commission well-lighted and animated storefronts.

III. *Create a Lake Street Design Studio*

Rationale: Design at all levels from small details to comprehensive planning impact the social environment, safety, livability, and economic vitality of every place. Design is often neglected or considered frivolous despite its critical nature. Good design is also not uniform in an urban environment. The most durable and vibrant spaces are made up of eclectic elements layered over time and connected by well-planned multi-modal transportation options and wayfinding systems.

Findings: Lake Street lacks sensitivity to the pedestrian and only recently has embraced aesthetic qualities fitting to its diversity of cultures and uses. Multiple entities from Hennepin County, Metro Transit, and the City of Minneapolis, to private, nonprofit, and public sector owners contribute to the built environment in ways that are sometimes not complementary or that consider its multiple functions or cultural sensitivities. City codes are not design-based except for the convenience and safety of automobile drivers.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Establish a visible, accessible space with a five-year commitment to bring sharpened design sensibilities to public and private sector development and improvements at all scales.
- 2.) Partner with University of Minnesota and other stakeholders to activate continuing design events, workshops, and exhibits of Lake Street history and future visions.
- 3.) Conduct participatory workshops during major street closure events while activating teams of observers to document use patterns of public spaces.
- 4.) Conduct full-scale charrettes over at least the first three years focusing on key spaces and spaces of inter-connections such as key nodes and Greenway access points.
- 5.) Focus efforts on all scale of built elements from corridor-wide wayfinding, lighting, and traffic calming to bike racks, flowers, light poles, and pocket parks.
- 6.) Conduct tactical or temporary urbanism projects as appropriate to test street activation ideas.

IV. *Engage Cultural Organizations with Funding for Creative Placemaking*

Rationale: Multi-year creative placemaking projects led by arts organizations and their partners make lasting positive change on the social, cultural, economic, and physical environment. Creative placemaking has demonstrated catalytic impacts in bringing together sometimes disparate players from the nonprofit, public, and public sectors to foster such activities.

Findings: Considerable creative placemaking experience exists among numerous cultural actors who are well-grounded in the community, yet funding for such activities from national sources has diminished. LISC has adopted creative placemaking as a key strategy for catalyzing equitable community development across the Twin Cities.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Constitute a fund of \$5 million from public and private sources to be employed over five years as a creative placemaking grant program jointly administered by LISC and Lake Street Council to activate cultural organizations in partnership with other nonprofits and businesses in the Corridor that will expand creative placemaking and cultural activation work.

V. *Adopt a Generally Accepted Corridor Identity and Purpose*

Rationale: A strong, shared identity is an essential ingredient for any district or corridor. This keeps internal stakeholders on the same page working together as well as helps those outside the Corridor understand the purpose and attractions. Remaining clear on the goals of economic and racial equity, as described in the Minneapolis 2040 Plan, is critical so it does not fall into the pattern of neighborhood gentrification. Thus, the cohesion of internal stakeholders is of greatest importance. An over emphasis on tourism attraction serves to increase property costs and an destabilize the community.

Findings: East Lake Street has an eclectic identity based in multiple cultures and various commercial, social, and civic functions. This is both its challenge and its strength. Unlike the Franklin Avenue American Indian Cultural Corridor, 38th

Street-George Floyd Square, Cedar Riverside Little Somalia, Little Mekong (St. Paul), and others, the wider East Lake Street Corridor has a multi-faceted identity. A smaller section of East Lake has a strong majority of Latinx businesses and may be highlighted as a Latinx District within the Corridor. Lake Street Council, together with Meet Minneapolis have considerable experience and capacity in branding and promotion but need outside expertise to see a wider set of possibilities in community and urban development.

Recommended Actions: Undertake a systematic in-depth branding effort involving East Lake stakeholders to identify the core purpose and optimal identity of an East Lake Cultural Corridor.

- 1.) Convene a broadly representative Steering Committee to select a branding consultant, evaluate options, and review branding and marketing plans.
- 2.) Engage a branding consultant who understands the complexity and the need for simultaneous community organizing while forming a sense of identity, and who understands cultural districts and corridors.
- 3.) Conduct research and a series of focus groups and other activities around Corridor and District identit(ies).
- 4.) Test and refine identity and branding.
- 5.) Develop and implement marketing campaigns.

N.B. While the work of developing a brand may require considerable time, it should be done in parallel with other actions described herein to build internal stakeholder cohesion and develop resources for other priorities.

For purposes of motivating discussion about a range of opportunities, CCB consultants identified two distinct potential purposes/identities for the corridor. Both are malleable and not exclusive of the other.

<p>OPTION A Make It On Lake</p>
<p>Concept: A dual meaning of a place for immigrants, entrepreneurs, youth, and others to “make it” or succeed; and a place rich in locally made art, food, cultural products, and services.</p> <p>Geography: Two blocks (north-south) of Lake between Pillsbury Ave. (west) to 29th Ave. (east)</p> <p>Key Assets: Builds on marketplaces and events on Lake; spaces for making food, cultural products, art and sharing cultural experiences</p> <p>Strategy/Structure: Formation of a network of a diverse mix of small businesses and cultural organizations along with a supportive network to ramp up culturally based products, activities, and special events/festivals</p>
<p>Pros</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive of various cultural communities including Indigenous and recent immigrant groups • Connects many established arts organizations located and operating on Lake Street • Strengthens nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and small businesses • Focuses marketplaces and events to support local businesses, artists, and craft-makers
<p>Cons</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length and diversity of the corridor as defined makes identity formation and branding complex • Corridor history/identity is a marketplace not makerspace • Lack of appropriate structures (old warehouses, factories) to accommodate artists, makers

<p>OPTION B Calle Lake</p>
<p>Concept: A Latinx-focused destination for shopping, services, cultural activities and experiences</p> <p>Geography: Two blocks (north-south) of Lake Street between 35W (west) and Cedar Ave. (east)</p> <p>Key Assets: Approximately 80% of retail, service, and food businesses in this section of East Lake are Latinx-identified</p> <p>Strategy/Structure: LEDC and LSC, and others build on business networking, branding, property ownership and public events/festivals and marketing</p>
<p>Pros</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-profile focal point to build Latinx businesses and cultural activities/organizations • A focused sense of place identity easily experienced in the built environment • Fertile ground for growing Latinx-focused events • Generates locally owned small business and wealth • Provides a culturally and economically welcoming entry point for new immigrants/arrivals
<p>Cons</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somali and other culturally defined businesses and some residents, could feel excluded • Over emphasis on tourism/consumption could foster real estate gentrification

Physical Realm

VI. *Promote Walkability and Safety for People of All Ages*

Rationale: Walking in the urban environment is important for health and well-being of older adults as well as children. An activated street is critical for successful urban consume-based businesses. Safe conditions include both the physical and the social. Smart design, investments, and maintenance provide good physical conditions including well-delineated and signaled crossings. Lighting and robust commercial and cultural activity contribute to the reality and sense of safety.

Findings: Survey responses called for improved wayfinding, lighting, plantings, and Greenway connections, among other. Community-based organizations cited parking, accessibility, and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Prioritize Design Center efforts to enhance walkability and safety throughout the corridor and at key entry points of the Greenway.
- 2.) Coordinate with City, County, Metro Transit, Greenway Coalition, and others to identify upgrades and innovations for walkability, connectivity, and two-wheel transportation uses.
- 3.) Combine aesthetic and street activation efforts (above) with infrastructure investments (below) to enhance walkability.
- 4.) Adopt “Jane’s Walk” neighborhood walking tours to spark interest in street-level retail and improvements.

VII. *Invest in Many Meaningful Small Scale Public Infrastructure Projects*

Rationale: On a day-to-day level people living and working on Lake Street, as well as visitors notice small improvements in the public realm and on individual storefronts and other properties. These motivate people to feel that larger forces care about their experience, and such improvements help them feel more valued and safer.

Findings: Multiple small public spaces and place of meaning for which improvements are not within the short- or mid-term budgets or plans of the City or County.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Form an LSGP Committee for public realm improvements.
- 2.) Develop a \$10 million fund for improvements to public spaces, façades, lighting, sidewalks, greenspaces, and wayfinding.
- 3.) Coordinate with the Lake Street Design Studio, LSC, City, County, Metro Transit to invest in small-scale strategic public realm improvements.

VIII. *Include Cultural Facilities and Nonprofits as Business Investments*

Rationale: Nonprofit and creative enterprises contribute significantly to the local economy as well as to the social vitality of commercial corridors. Language in appropriations and programs administered through DEED, MainStreets, and other public and private sector entities sometimes preclude arts and cultural or other nonprofit facilities for capital investment.

Findings: LSGP survey respondents prioritized cultural vibrancy and large capital investments. Meanwhile, they did not rank permanent arts presenting spaces high. We attribute this latter ranking partly to a historic separation or categorization of arts nonprofits as less than meaningful in an economic sense. We believe it is important to advance different thinking based on current understandings of the multiple benefits of these organizations and the facilities needed for them to thrive and generate sustained activities to animate the community life and commercial activity in the Corridor. Community-based organizations emphasized the need for shared spaces to conduct cultural and social activities. Nonprofits are currently ineligible for the City's Commercial Property Development Fund (CPDF), a flexible resource that, if more fully funded, could assist nonprofits within the corridor.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Survey and amend policy documents of entities providing resources for Lake Street recovery and revitalization to include nonprofit facilities as eligible for capital and other investments in ways similar to provision of resources to for-profit businesses.
- 2.) Invest up to \$15 million in cultural facilities over the next five years in the East Lake Corridor (see above). This would include upgrading the Avalon Theater in partnership with Heart of the Beast; significant support for the Somali Museum should it remain in the Corridor; funding for the Latino Museum of Minnesota as it builds its programs and capacities; and support for the Pangea World Theatre building at the Minnehaha node.
- 3.) Engage with planning efforts to evaluate appropriate uses of the 3rd Precinct building and site for community and cultural uses.

IX. *Make Strategic Large Capital Investments that Enhance the Corridor's Cultural Identity*

Rationale: Larger investments in the physical realm demonstrate major commitment to the Corridor and are badly needed to emerge from the destruction of 2020 in ways both actually and symbolically stronger than before. Studies have identified Lake Street recovery costs in the hundreds of millions.

Findings: LSGP members indicated support for major capital investments for rebuilding and upgrading of public and privately owned properties and infrastructure. Our mapping study identified a minimum of \$5.5 million in capital needs for current nonprofits within the corridor and another \$5 million-\$10 million to accommodate the aspirations of cultural organizations active in the corridor. Significant lobbying activities are in motion at the State Capitol as this is written in early 2023 in hopes of substantial public investments. Numbers cited here and are best estimates of what are needed and possible at this time.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Advocate with the Minnesota Legislature during the 2023 session for a comprehensive package for Lake Street Recovery and Reconstruction, allocating resources for the building and upgrading of key cultural assets.
- 2.) Develop a \$15 million capital fund for cultural entities developing and redeveloping spaces on Lake Street giving priority to those damaged during the summer 2020 uprising and existing entities. This should be seeded with 2023 legislative funds. The fund will prioritize organizations currently operating on Lake Street with secondary investments in new entities serving key populations in the corridor.
- 3.) Include representatives of impacted entities and residents in allocation of capital funds.

X. *Designate & Highlight Formal Corridor Boundaries Based on Identity and Purpose*

Rationale: A robust collection of cultural assets and discernible geographic area is critical to a recognizable cultural corridor or district. Cultural assets include creative and cultural, as well as ethnically defined enterprises, both for-profit and nonprofit. Formally declaring an identity of a district is a highly sensitive act and requires time and careful community organizing to be successful.

Findings: Agreeing on a sense of cultural identity is complicated. Mapping work identified significant Somali and East African businesses and organizations located adjacent to the Pillsbury Avenue area around Lake Street. Other major clusters are seen around 4th and Lake, Chicago and Lake, Bloomington and Lake, and Minnehaha and Lake. Community-based organizations identified diversity as the key asset of Lake Street. While an earlier City designation for the Corridor ended at Cedar Avenue on the east, this leaves out such assets as Pioneer Cemetery, MIGIZI, the Adult Basic Education Center, and YWCA that roll out immediately adjacent with a significant cluster of assets at Minnehaha to the East Lake Library at 28th Avenue. Alternatively, between I-35 on the west and Cedar Avenue on the east there is a very high concentration of Latinx businesses. As a business corridor, this area has a potentially strong identity – undoubtedly the largest concentration of Latinx establishments in the Midwest outside of Chicago and Detroit. Somali, Asian, Nordic, and other culturally identified businesses are also sprinkled throughout. It is not known whether there would be a comfort level among those enterprises operating within a corridor identified as Latinx. It is not unheard of for cultural districts to overlap or to be a subset of another.

Recommended Actions: Define and formally designate the East Lake Cultural Corridor to correspond to the purpose and identity determined through the above branding effort.

- 1.) Determine and establish agreement on boundaries of the corridor.
- 2.) Request formal recognition of the East Lake Cultural Corridor, revising the existing City delineation as appropriate.
- 3.) Coordinate with Meet Minneapolis, LSC, East Lake Cultural Network (See Recommendation XI), and others to tell the story to external stakeholders.

Capacity Building and Policy

XI. *Establish a Culturally Rooted Organization to Align and Strengthen the Corridor's Cultural Identity*

Rationale: To function with a sense of identity and purpose a successful cultural corridor needs a recognized advocate with capacity to coordinate cultural activators. Its key players or internal stakeholders need to share information and maintain communication within the corridor as well as coordinate their own and others' corridor-based activities. This also requires communication and promotion efforts with wider communities.

Findings: In conducting this planning work, consultants found regular communication among cultural organizations was not often in evidence. They are stretched by their own work and daily survival. As far as other organizations that might provide coordination, the LSGP mission is broad and its efforts focused on linking major public, private, and nonprofit entities. Lake Street Council maintains the longest running and most extensive networks within the corridor but covers a wider geographic area and multitude of interests. For a cultural corridor to have coherence, an additional entity for networking, coordination, advocacy, and marketing needs to be developed.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Convene and build an East Lake Cultural Network, a coalition to share information, coordinate events and resources and grow into a coordinative and advocacy organization for the Cultural Corridor (inclusive of the wider area from Pillsbury Ave. to 29th Ave.).
- 2.) LISC and the Arts and Cultural Committee of the LSGP convene a leadership group to plan and secure resources for the new entity.
- 3.) Confer with leadership of other coalitions such as the Creative Enterprise Zone and Great Northern Festival to advise on formation of a network.
- 4.) Engage a part-time organizer to help build the entity.
- 5.) Articulate purpose and goals of the newly formed group.
- 6.) Grow to address activities such as calendar coordination, events, branding, organizing strategies, etc.
- 7.) Launch a website of activities and stories about creative and cultural entities and activities in the corridor. (See example: <https://www.creativeenterprisezone.org/>)

XII. *Expand Efforts of the LSGP to Build a Shared Agenda*

Rationale: The bottom line for any geographic community to make progress is for people to work together across sectors, industries, interest and demographic groups, and other differences. Lake Street stakeholders are about as diverse as can be found in any community. Finding simple consensus on what constitutes progress is an essential early step and continuing challenge that requires ongoing, focused work. Sustainable efforts can only move at the speed of trust.

Findings: LSGP's long-term efforts to build a shared agenda among major public and private entities and to coordinate action have paid off in the past. However, growing challenges leap-frogged ahead of the capacity of stakeholders to make progress. The COVID-19 pandemic and murder of George Floyd advanced urgency around important issues and precipitated new challenges. Many groups from within and from outside the community jumped into action since the uprisings in May of 2020 with good intentions but little coordination. From the launching of this Cultural Corridor effort, it was clear that information was not consistently shared among the actors. Navigating and understanding the various efforts and players was challenging. Trust among some is thin. The LSGP leadership needs to mobilize a higher level of commitment from its members.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Reinforce and expand efforts of the LSGP. Develop and present to LSGP members an action plan to elevate the capacity of their efforts.
- 2.) Plan and conduct a high-profile Lake Street/Greenway Summit to re-invigorate and raise the profile of LSGP efforts and begin resolution of the contradictions and differing strategies found during this study.
- 3.) Articulate a focus on economic and social equity in development and the lively diversity of Lake Street.
- 4.) Recruit more members to lead task forces and committees with assignments to advance different dimensions of equitable revitalization.
- 5.) Generate more dialog between LSGP members and street-level businesses, residents, and workers; putting more "faces to the names".
- 6.) Attract greater attention for actions and "wins" spearheaded by LSGP with credit accruing to the implementers on the street.

XIII. *Enhance Understanding and Support for the Creative Economy and Cultural Sector*

Rationale: Understanding the economic contributions of the creative and cultural sector is relatively new. As a distinct sector, it is more recently and thus less recognized in the U.S. than in some other parts of the world. For a cultural corridor to be sustained, greater appreciation of the creative sector is important. It goes by the names "creative economy," "creative sector," and "creative industries," and includes both for- and nonprofit enterprises that generate products and services based in creativity. These include art, architecture, design, media, music, publishing, radio, and others under categories set up by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis. They comprise a significant portion of the economy.

Findings: Responses to the LSGP survey indicated a lack of interest in investing in artists, makers, and the coordination and marketing of cultural activities. The sector itself often doesn't recognize its own coherence or significance as an economic player. Understanding the significance of the creative sector has been evolving with additional data now available documenting the direct and indirect impacts of arts, culture, and the larger set of creative industries on local and regional economies. The City of Minneapolis Office of Arts and Culture (now Department of Cultural Affairs) has been advocating and providing data on the creative sector for nearly a decade. Nonprofit organizations, especially smaller entrepreneurial organizations, are left out of the conversation regarding the needs of small businesses. Yet their work is often driven by sales of tickets, artworks, or services provided to individuals, schools, corporations, and others. They employ workers and operate from storefronts making important contributions to street-level vitality. They simply operate under a different tax classification.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Groups including LSC and LSGP, as well as members of the (to-be-formed) East Lake Cultural Network coordinate with the Minneapolis Department of Cultural Affairs in efforts to document and promote understanding of the creative sector.
- 2.) Work with the City to commission site-specific study of the economic impact of the creative sector within cultural corridors.
- 3.) Include messages related to economic impacts in both internal communications within the East Lake Cultural Network, and in external promotions.

XIV. *Support Ownership and Capacity-Building for Local Makers, Artists, Culture Bearers, and Culturally Based Businesses*

Rationale: A sustainable cultural district or corridor that avoids having a gentrifying impact requires the ongoing presence and viability of individual makers, artists, culture bearers, craftspeople, and culturally based producers who own their businesses and real estate. These would include unique, locally made products and services from clothing to chilaquiles, puppets to photographs, and sambusas to sushi. Sales, distribution, or presentation of the work builds identity and helps stabilize and accrue economic benefit to local communities. Dollars generated recirculate at a higher rate. Additionally, the labor of local producers and artists have additional social, aesthetic, and educational value. The nature of retail marketing and its relationship to making or manufacturing are changing. Making and selling can more easily be accomplished side by side.

Findings: Lake Street has a long history and strong reputation as an eclectic retail and service space, although not

so much as a producing space. Making and selling of cultural artifacts and services, from food to clothing to personal care are increasingly combined. Studies have documented that artists, craftspeople, and makers are important economic contributors to their immediate areas as they tend to live and to source materials and services locally. Key for their sustainability – and that of the corridor – remains locally owned, affordable, and appropriate spaces and outlets for their work. This includes performance venues, retail markets, small manufacturing spaces, and distribution for online sales. The historic strength of Lake Street as a marketplace and distribution hub should be built upon while finding opportunities to increase local ownership.

Recommended Actions: In parallel to the place branding efforts above:

- 1.) Conduct an inventory of locally made products and of concepts to expand on the locally made.
- 2.) Develop a brand and focused promotional efforts for things made on Lake.
- 3.) Assemble a pool of capital funds through CDFIs and other intermediaries to assist individual business owners and artists to secure property ownership.
- 4.) Identify and support low-cost studio/working spaces in Corridor that connect directly to retail sales spaces.
- 5.) Identify and develop workspace and affordable housing to keep artists, makers, and craftspeople in the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods.
- 6.) Promote local spending, or “buy-local,” especially supporting locally made products along with ongoing creative placemaking efforts of LISC, which can be coordinated with the City of Minneapolis Department of Arts and Culture, LSC, and Meet Minneapolis and support Corridor artists by branding products that are East Lake Made.

XV. *Build Capacity for Arts and Cultural Activators*

Rationale: Community-based cultural organizations focused on social change work or rooted in BIPOC communities have long suffered from under-investment and lack of recognition for their efforts because they don’t fit within mainstream definitions of art or community development. Their leadership remain committed yet are severely under-resourced. Similarly, culturally based producers or products have a more difficult time finding financing and support.

Findings: Multiple such groups and small businesses on Lake Street have made major contributions to the vitality of the street and to the lives of local residents for decades. Most suffered further as a result of the May 2020 uprisings and COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Establish a five-year, \$2 million program for general support and capacity building among cultural nonprofits administered by Springboard for the Arts and Propel Nonprofits, and a capital fund for small businesses of up to \$20 million through LEDC, NDC, LISC, or others.
- 2.) Focus efforts on organizations rooted in communities for whom English is not a first language to assist with financial, grant writing, and communications with city government and other institutions.

XVI. *Establish a city-funded Cultural Districts Capital Fund to Resource Needed Efforts*

Rationale: Among the dozens of city- and state-sponsored cultural or arts district programs across the country, those that provide local districts with seed or operational funding and/or tax incentives have the most visible and successful districts. Launching a district requires grass-roots efforts but rarely are there sufficient financial or human resources in place or readily at hand. Main Streets programs provide a good model. Local organizing is required, and matching funds or in-kind support is also needed. The Native American Community Development Institute on Franklin Avenue was in place and able to raise funds to launch the American Indian Cultural Corridor there. East Lake Street and other communities across the city lack existing organizational capacity to organize and launch a cultural corridor. For the city to have a successful program, such a fund will be necessary.

Findings: The Minneapolis 2040 Plan set up a progressive vision and framework for cultural corridors and districts but provided no resources or city support services to local communities to implement the plan. Over the past 40 years, the city has provided a variety of support programs for neighborhood organizations, local small businesses, and commercial corridors. Cultural corridors have unique needs and goals, however, these other efforts provide useful knowledge about the most effective and successful approaches.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.) Establish a ten-year, City-funded \$20 million program for start-up and general support for cultural corridors and districts across the city. TIF funding, or other methods of long-term financing should be investigated.
- 2.) Devise mission-based and organizational criteria for providing different types of funds so as to incentivize primary goals of the cultural corridor program (e.g. capacity-building, capital, streetscape improvements, operations, etc.).

SUMMARY



Photo by Explore Minnesota

This study and the actions recommended above build on the robust cluster of cultural resources and active partners across nonprofits, coalitions, businesses, and government who are working together on East Lake Street. They have joined closer together to re-build following challenges resulting from the murder of George Floyd and to construct a shared and cohesive sense of identity and purpose.

Small restaurants, retail shops, and local services, including the largest cluster of Latinx businesses in the Twin Cities, give East Lake Street a distinctive character. It has long been, and continues to be, a place where connections are made. Its strategic geographic location, transportation infrastructure, and exhilarating diversity of people make it one of the most unique, important, and culturally energetic areas of the Twin Cities. Strategies described above focus on building on these assets through increased coordination among stakeholders.

As stated earlier in this report, implementation of these recommendations requires leadership and coordination. Much good work by Lake Street stakeholders is ongoing and should be supported simultaneous to building greater consensus and collaboration. While major new resources are called for, hesitation is not. Imagination, ingenuity, and caring are not in short supply. At the same time, there is a shared urgency to work towards a prosperous and equitable future and for the well-being of the small businesses, community-based organizations, and residents who make East Lake Street and surrounding neighborhoods their home and center of community.

Appendix:

DETAILED INVENTORY OF KEY CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ASSETS (CULTURAL ACTIVATORS)



Photo by Tom Borrup

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Barebones Productions
Key Contacts: Peter Schulze, Pasha Milbrath, Mina Leierwood, Tara Fahey
Location: No permanent space; Midtown Greenway

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To bring art into community and community into art through movement, puppetry and spectacle performance, creative re-use, education, and collaboration.

Brief History:

Founded in 1994, the BareBones Puppet Show has hosted themed Halloween Extravaganza performances. Before relocating to the Midtown Greenway in 2020, the annual event took place at Hidden Falls with over 250 puppeteers, artists, musicians, performers, and others to help the event come together.

Service Area:

Barebones Productions serves audiences from around the Twin Cities. The Barebones Puppet Show was originally held in Highland Park (St. Paul) and moved to Midtown Greenway in 2022

Facilities:

Barebones Productions has never owned its own facility and continues to rent or share spaces. Currently, a working space has been donated for use at an estimated value of \$5,000 to \$10,000 in annual expenses. There are looming concerns about outgrowing the spaces available and discussions about future facility possibilities.

Budget and Staffing:

One paid, part-time administrator and a volunteer board comprised of senior members of the organization lead operations. Annually, Barebones Productions budgets approximately \$40,000 for puppet shows, in part due to waived or low-cost fees for artists. The annual budget is estimated to double if all participating artists received living wages for their time and talent.

Lake Street Involvement:

While Barebones Productions has been operational for nearly three decades, a focus on Lake Street has increased over the past three years. Many of the participating artists are located near Lake Street. The organization has roots in the artistic community at In the Heart of the Beast and via the May Day parade and workshops. Barebones identifies with the artistic core of Lake Street and recognizes its value as an incubator for puppet artists and visual/performing arts opportunities.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

The building plans for Midtown Global Market are dependent on what is currently budgeted and what funds are available. The primary focus for its development and Friends of Global Market's success is to manage growth effectively. Not many permitting issues exist for planned programs, and temporary permitting for alcohol during Open Streets is viewed as efficient (however, less "red tape" with regard to permitting is always preferred for the venue).

Program Areas:

A legacy of community-building that incubates the collective puppetry work of the Twin Cities is critical to the organization. The Barebones Puppet Show is the primary event of the year, which typically hosts dozens of outdoor pop-up works along Lake Street based on rotating themes. Education is core to Barebones Productions' work, emphasizing internal conversations that highlight the artistic rigor of puppetry arts.

Special Initiatives:

Barebones Productions has emerged in an artistic climate that values collaboration and skill-sharing. Recent networking events were designed to be intergenerational and cross-cultural despite limited funding. The organization is also interested in helping predominantly white-led organizations navigate if and how people of color are involved with decision-making and program delivery. An underlying goal of this vision is to identify career paths that stimulate living wages for artists

Barriers to Success:

In alignment with an inclusive organizational vision, a major barrier has emerged in Barebones Productions' ability to hire enough staff for specific shows, particularly those who identify as BIPOC and/or queer. The organization grapples with hiring based on affordability, which can limit aspirational goals for the staff to reflect the community served, in addition to reducing program offerings due to jobs not being filled.

Catalytic Investments:

As active spaces are being outgrown, an annual investment of \$50,000 would cover rental costs for a shared venue that multiple organizations in the community could access. In addition, access to a large, flexible space with a commercial kitchen would align with Barebones Production's vision of radical hospitality. Other investment areas include support with permitting processes and the resources needed to negotiate with the city, particularly the park board, discussions on event security (rather than a police presence), and more pedestrian-friendly spaces dedicated to the local community.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

Barebones Productions anticipates continued use of the Midtown Greenway as the puppet show location and a site for community healing through art activities. While limited in staff capacity, Barebones expressed an interest in expanding internal conversations that advance equity in arts leadership and sharing those reflections and processes with other partners on the corridor.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: CaMinO
Key Contacts: Columba Reyes
Location: No permanent space; Plaza Centenario

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To bond the residents of Cuernavaca and Minneapolis through artistic, cultural, and educational exchanges.

Brief History:

Founded in 2008, CaMinO, which stands for Cuernavaca-Minneapolis Sister Cities Organization, was established as a way to bring the cities of Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico, and Minneapolis and its residents together. Work with the Mexican consulate in 2006 led to the Festival of Nations, which fostered the idea for CaMinO as an international artist exchange.

Service Area:

CaMinO strengthens the cities of Cuernavaca and Minneapolis through educational, economic, and linguistic exchanges centered on Mexican art and culture to create connected, resilient, prosperous, and peaceful communities.

Facilities:

CaMinO leads most of its work from Plaza Centenario on Lake Street but faces challenges with safety and neglect from the city.

Budget and Staffing:

CaMinO's annual budget is under \$50,000. Events and activities are funded and staffed as needed throughout the year. One paid staff and volunteers fuel CaMinO's work, and occasionally stipends for artists are available.

Lake Street Involvement:

CaMinO considers itself deeply aligned with the Lake Street community, and many small groups are working to develop greater cohesion and collaboration.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

Resources are needed to activate Plaza Centenario to bring people to Lake Street and sustain CaMinO's operations.

Program Areas:

More than 20 years' worth of small events have been held at Plaza Centenario. Programs focus on specific community needs like food scarcity.

Special Initiatives:

Previous work with the City Council and local developers helped create a draft for the vision of the Plaza with the goal of creating a cultural site that amplified educational opportunities. The development partnership dissolved following reports of a death in the Plaza, rendering it a risk for construction.

Barriers to Success:

Prior to incorporation as a nonprofit, CaMinO struggled to secure philanthropic support because of the size and capacity of the organization. However, since formalizing, the challenges have persisted given the highly competitive nature of local grant-making and language barriers. For programs and events, there is also a need for greater technical support to lead innovative experiences.

Catalytic Investments:

Safety is the number one priority for CaMinO, followed by the need to create more activity and revenue for businesses. Marketing and advertising are also critical needs, with more billboards and visual promotions seen as a positive investment. Concerns of local developers coopting cultural events were flagged as a concern for the future.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Advancing the Corridor:

CaMinO's leadership is active with Lake Street Council and prioritizes connections between the Latinx community and other cultural groups through its work

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Confluence Studio
Key Contacts: Sam Gould
Location: No permanent space; 9th Ward

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To be committed to the holistic development of the East Lake Street Corridor and Minneapolis' 9th Ward.

Brief History:

Founded in 2020, Confluence Studio was launched by Sam Gould & Duaba Unenra and is formed out of the initiative Beyond Repair, an ethos and a practice that looks past the rhetoric of “people and places that need fixing” to support ideas of collective learning, community control, and the harnessing of the radical imaginary. Confluence Studio's practice is to resource the entire neighborhood with social tools (material and immaterial) so that public gatherings and our social landscape might allow us to take the conversation beyond basic needs and small differences, and towards a shifting and expanding terrain of power, democracy, and communal living.

Service Area:

Confluence Studio's service area is Minneapolis' 9th Ward and particularly the neighborhoods of Powderhorn, Central, and East Phillips. Efforts also contribute to the wider Twin Cities community and occasionally regional collaboration.

Facilities:

Confluence Studio typically operates in a “pop-up” model and does not operate from a permanent space.

Budget and Staffing:

An operational budget is less formalized for Confluence Studio, instead securing money for projects as needed to move them forward.

Lake Street Involvement:

In 2018, the site of Roberts Shoe Store burned down, and accelerated development efforts were viewed as disadvantageous. Participatory and community-engaged development activities were held, with Confluence Studio activating the space prior to and during the uprising in 2020. The effort relocated to the courtyard of Moon Palace Books with the intention to be adjacent to the Third Precinct site. In Fall of 2021, a major convening was held in the precinct parking lot following a referendum on the police budget.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

Confluence Studio has a fiscal relationship with The Third Rail. The project is generally unaffiliated and unstructured, focusing on a highly collaborative and improvisational model.

Program Areas:

Confluence Studio was founded after an invitation by a local family foundation to support their work in facilitating a participatory re-development process with the neighborhood to envision, determine, and build on a vacant lot at the corner of Chicago Ave and East Lake Street to become an ad-hoc “anti-institution” of artist studios, music spaces, small businesses, and galleries, among other entities.

Special Initiatives:

Following the impact of organizing efforts on the Roberts Shoe Store's lot, a new focus has been on material and social infrastructure support based on that previous work. The approach for Confluence Studio is to be tactically unstructured and adaptive to the landscape.

Barriers to Success:

The biggest barrier for Confluence Studio is the complexity of its work within a system that is described as inherently trying to maintain the status quo. Since the uprising and pandemic, a sentiment of returning to normalcy neglects how previous systems are damaging. An entrenchment of “old guard” attitudes in the broader community was also described as a challenge.

Catalytic Investments:

From the Roberts Shoes Store effort emerged “social tools” that are often material structures serving a utilitarian purpose. One such structure is the Autonomous Mobile Media Unit, which serves as an equipment hub for shared use. This catalytic work could energize certain pockets of the neighborhoods or collaborate with local groups to activate storefronts. The presence of global corporations taking over former local and family-owned businesses signals an economic effect to the organization that siphons money out of the neighborhood. Another key concern is the stronghold of nonprofit and social service organizations that can restrict how fast systems change for the community. With this in mind, the organization believes there needs to be more robust and experimental ways to understand the pulse of the neighborhood and create democratic and social change.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

Confluence Studio is committed to the community of East Lake Street and the resistance of “melting pot” narratives that prioritize assimilation over being in close proximity and understanding of different cultures and identities.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Division of Indian Work
Key Contacts: Louise Matson
Location: 1001 E Lake St, Minneapolis, MN 55407

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To support and strengthen urban American Indian people through culturally based education, traditional healing approaches, and leadership development.

Brief History:

Founded in 1952, Division of Indian Work emerged to fill a service and basic needs gap following the federal government's encouragement of Native Americans to move from reservations into urban areas. The organization has grown to be a major player in delivering community-serving programs and services in direct partnership with peer organizations.

Service Area:

Division of Indian Work serves the American Indian communities in the Twin Cities, the state, and across the country.

Facilities:

The primary building Division of Indian Work operates meets the organization's needs. However, some renovation costs are expected, particularly for the neighboring facility that is used as a home for teen mothers and is in disrepair. The estimated cost to rehabilitate the neighboring property is estimated to be between \$2 and \$5 million, but it is likely preferable to tear down the existing structure and rebuild it.

Budget and Staffing:

Division of Indian Work has an operating budget of approximately \$3 million. Staffing has been a challenge, with several staff vacancies currently open. .

Lake Street Involvement:

As a native-serving organization on Lake Street, Division of Indian Work has struggled to be included in Franklin Avenue's progressive development opportunities as a designated American Indian corridor. The multicultural identity of the corridor is important to the organization, and no single culture or nationality defines the wider corridor. Murals and beautification efforts have been important as a deterrent for crime, but the interspersal of empty lots and housing challenges remain an area of concern. Other key leaders on the corridor include Isuroon, MIGIZI, Midtown Global Market, Indigenous Food Labs, and leaders from Los Oscampos, who were particularly key in supporting the community after 2020.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

Resources are needed to activate Plaza Centenario to bring people to Lake Street and sustain CaMinO's operations.

Program Areas:

The organization leads programs in youth leadership development, family services, domestic violence and anger management support, elder services, food shelf and health services, and foster care support. Division of Indian Work also coordinates service referrals with Hennepin and Ramsey Counties.

Special Initiatives:

Division of Indian Work is involved in policy-level training and advocacy as part of the Urban Indigenous Legacy Initiative. Leaders from the organization regularly meet with elected officials and are concerned with ways to center Lake Street families in testimonials at the capitol to ensure their voices are heard.

Barriers to Success:

Staffing is viewed as a key concern for the future of the organization. More broadly, housing issues are also a challenge for Division of Indian Work. Recently, a small encampment was housed in the organization's parking lot, reinforcing the need for human services support as a requisite for any specific capital development.

Catalytic Investments:

The organization's long-term vision for Lake Street is to sustain a multicultural residential and business community that is a safe destination for people to visit. Policing is a critical consideration for future success, with a reimagined role as "peace officers" instead of militant enforcers. Relatedly, the lingering clean-up from 2020 is still an area of concern. The unkept Third Precinct was described as a specific blight and symbol of abandonment by local officials. There is a perception that the government's response to 2020 was that if the community burns down property, the community has to pay for its rebuilding itself. However, many organizations are not equipped to manage such challenges.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

Capacity challenges will limit the organization's ability to participate in corridor-wide planning efforts. However, Division of Indian Work desires to support processes for managing facility spaces and other collaborative opportunities for future development as staffing permits.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Friends of Global Market
Key Contacts: Matt Tell
Location: 920 E Lake St, Minneapolis, MN 55407

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To promote the economic, social and cultural assets of Minnesota and celebrate the healthy foods, arts, crafts and other aspects of our diverse heritage. (Midtown Global Market)

To support the Midtown Global Market as a vital community resource for small business, cultural diversity, and free or low-cost programming. (Friends of Global Market)

Brief History:

Founded in 2004, Midtown Global Market has over 32 locally owned businesses and has gained national attention as a vibrant, cultural market where communities gather. Midtown Global Market strives to help entrepreneurs and small businesses succeed in their operations, and all events at the Midtown Global Market are typically free of charge. Friends of Global Market supports the mission of Midtown Global Market by leveraging financial and social support to sustain the facility as a resource for small business owners and patrons. As a standalone 501(c)(3), Friends of Global Market leads all marketing and events for the facility.

Service Area:

Midtown Global Market was created to be a place with many cuisines, art, and culture in one place. It serves the general public with a specific focus on services and retail for international communities.

Facilities:

Midtown Global Market is located on the ground level of the Midtown Exchange building, a historic structure and mixed-use building formerly home to Sears, Roebuck, and Company Mail-Order Warehouse and Retail Store. It is the second-largest building in Minnesota regarding leasable space after the Mall of America.

Budget and Staffing:

Friends of Global Market has two paid staff and a board of four volunteer members.

Lake Street Involvement:

Lake Street partnerships are essential for Friends of Global Market as it continues to become a community hub. While Friends of Global Market produces a small portion of the events held at Midtown Global Market, a vast majority are operated by community partners. Recent collaborations include the Division of Indian Work and Second Harvest Heartland.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

The building plans for Midtown Global Market are dependent on what is currently budgeted and what funds are available. The primary focus for its development and Friends of Global Market's success is to manage growth effectively. Not many permitting issues exist for planned programs, and temporary permitting for alcohol during Open Streets is viewed as efficient (however, less "red tape" with regard to permitting is always preferred for the venue).

Program Areas:

Midtown Global Market hosts year-round events and activities that are typically free to the community.

Special Initiatives:

An emerging project at Midtown Global Market is focused on designing a beauty node for barbershops, salons, and other related services.

Barriers to Success:

The biggest issue for Friends of Global Market is managing budgeting and staffing challenges. Priorities for events and other programs rely on revenue and traffic into Midtown Global Market to be considered a success. Another major obstacle is growing back the retail traffic on Lake Street since the pandemic.

Catalytic Investments:

Safety is recognized as the most pressing need for the corridor. Despite many initiatives emerging from across the Lake Street ecosystem, local and national media's portrayal of the community sustains a negative connotation. The collective efforts of reframing the public narratives about Lake Street will be necessary to move forward. Empty lots on Lake Street are also a key concern. For example, the vacant lot on the east side of the market (formerly Family Dollar) would be an important location to develop a community-based project in the future. As a way to sustain the role of Midtown Global Market for the community, projects that complement its services would be beneficial in general. This may include a potential museum-style attraction that showcases the culture and impact of the market as an institution.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

Friends of Global Market seek to be a continued resource for local organizations. Its goal of expanding earned revenue in areas like merchandising and food programs will benefit the vendors at Midtown Global Market.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery
Key Contacts: Susan Hunter Weir
Location: 2945 Cedar Ave S, Minneapolis, MN, 55407

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To be an all-volunteer organization dedicated to the restoration and preservation of Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery.

Brief History:

As the oldest existing cemetery in Minneapolis, Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery manages the public activities of the Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldier Memorial Cemetery (formerly known as Layman's). The cemetery is recognized as the final resting place of those who helped shape the history of early Minneapolis, including several prominent territorial pioneers like Charles Christmas, Edwin Hedderly, and Philander Prescott. It is also the site for approximately 200 military veterans and many of the city's early African American residents. Several thousand immigrants, primarily from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, are buried at the cemetery, and over half of the cemetery's 20,000 residents are children. Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery were formed to preserve the site with a commitment to making local history accessible to everyone.

Service Area:

Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery works with a broad range of the community, including youth groups, nonprofits, local government, higher education groups, civic groups, and the general public.

Facilities:

The City owns the physical structure of the cemetery, and the 22,000 occupied graves belong to the families. The cemetery has several distinctive architectural features, including the caretaker's cottage, which dates from about 1871. Other decorative structures, such as the flagpole, the fence and gates, and monuments to territorial women and military veterans date back to the 1920s and 1930s. In 2002, Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery was placed on the National Register of Historic Places—one of the few cemeteries with that distinction.

Budget and Staffing:

Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery operates without paid staff or paid membership. Through volunteer leadership, the organization fundraises roughly \$5,000 annually. The cemetery itself has one paid staff person who has limited hours for half of the year.

Lake Street Involvement:

As a deeply collaborative organization, Friends of the Cemetery works with groups on Lake Street like In the Heart of the Beast for commissioned performances and tree planting, Trilon Cinema to support outdoor film screenings, and the Seward Concert Band, among others. The organization is also a major partner for Open Streets.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

In partnership with the City, a recent bonding effort raised over \$2 million to restore and renovate key features of the cemetery property, including the perimeter fence. Among the major expenses for the organization, roughly \$1,000 is raised to support programs during Memorial Day, and additional revenue is secured from small speaking fees and commissioned research on specific burial sites. Leaders at Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery are acutely aware of its capacity as a volunteer organization and operate within the parameters of what their team can handle.

Program Areas:

Programs typically focus on community outreach and education. Events held by the Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery typically do not charge for admission, aside from ticketed movie events which attract 250-300 guests. The largest

event was an outdoor concert with more than 1,500 attendees, and smaller events focused on jazz and poetry take place throughout the year.

Special Initiatives:

A primary goal for the organization is to lower the age of interest for the cemetery through online engagement and work with youth groups. A leader at the organization also authors a monthly column in the Alley Newspaper focused on the Phillips neighborhood. New efforts to explore specific themes like the burials of native leaders and African American firefighters are emerging.

Barriers to Success:

Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery is a nimble organization, given its relatively low overhead. However, its key needs stem from relaunching community events since the pandemic began.

Catalytic Investments:

As a historic site on the national register, the local government fields most capital development needs. Project-related costs like restoration of grave markers are desired but present a major cost for the organization, estimated at \$8,000 annually.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Advancing the Corridor:

Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery works most effectively as an event and specialized program provider. The May Day Parade was recognized as a significant community inflection point that suggests future large-scale convenings and celebrations are integral to the cohesion of the Lake Street community.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge
Key Contacts: Chris Mozena
Location: 3010 Minnehaha Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55406

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To be a fiercely independent, artist-driven, inclusionary, multi-use event center located in a historic Firehouse #21 in South Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood.

Brief History:

Founded in 2016, Hook and Ladder Theatre & Lounge is operated by the Firehouse Performing Arts Center (FPAC) and sustained by a strong core of artists and volunteers. The organization and venue emerged following the closure of nearly a dozen community-based venues in rapid succession. During the summer of 2020, it was a site for basic needs support and immediate community need following the destruction of the Third Precinct building in the neighboring lot. Hook and Ladder Theatre & Lounge presents various original performing arts, music, dance, film, literary, theatrical, fashion, visual, comedic, culinary, and other multi-disciplinary events and programs.

Service Area:

Hook and Ladder Theatre & Lounge primarily serves arts-based audiences from South Minneapolis and the greater Twin Cities. The focus of its work has been refined during its seven years in operation to serve cultural communities in the Twin Cities more intentionally.

Facilities:

Hook and Ladder Theatre & Lounge operates out of a facility built in 1894 that requires ongoing maintenance. For example, a recent project to address deterioration issues in the foundation cost roughly \$20,000 to complete. Furthermore, the building sustained approximately \$40,000 in damages during the social unrest of 2020. An outdoor canopy was erected in 2021, and a pod-style seating model was briefly used to accommodate guests. The rental cost of the canopy is roughly \$30,000 per year. Hook and Ladder Theatre & Lounge joins several other local businesses and organizations at the intersection of Minnehaha and Lake, which all utilize the Third Precinct private vehicle lot. The lot is maintained by Hook and Ladder Theatre and is viewed as a critical site for community-facing development.

Budget and Staffing:

Roughly 14 staff work at Hook and Ladder Theatre & Lounge, which the organization recognizes is fewer than other comparable performing arts spaces in the Twin Cities.

Lake Street Involvement:

The Parkway is considered a peer organization for Hook and Ladder Theatre, in addition to the higher concentration of venue stages in other parts of the Twin Cities. Hook and Ladder Theatre & Lounge has strong working relationships with The Hub, Moon Palace Books, and Arbiter Brewing.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge operates under the Firehouse Performing Arts Center umbrella and typically hosts 6-8 performances per week. Performances maintain an 80/20 revenue model with artists. \$50,000 in grant funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board has helped sustain the organization in recent years.

Program Areas:

The venue is home to a wide range of ticketed concerts, non-profit fundraisers, community programs, outdoor festivals, album & book releases, art installations/shows, presentations, workshops, and seminars. In addition, Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge hosts private event rentals for the community.

Special Initiatives:

A growing Juneteenth celebration has been led by Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge over the past three years. The event is the city's largest event focused on the holiday and recently expanded to a free community event. More than 1,000 people attended in 2022, and the forthcoming event is anticipated to reach a significantly larger audience. It costs roughly \$25,000 to lead the event.

Barriers to Success:

There is a clear frustration between the organization and the City of Minneapolis regarding the lack of progress on renovating the neighboring Third Precinct site. In addition, some concerns exist related to the implementation of the 2040 Plan for the city, which is feared may encourage gentrification.

Catalytic Investments:

Capital investment in the Third Precinct parking lot could transform the space into an outdoor structure that allows for year-round programming. The value of the parcel lot is estimated to be \$500,000 and would likely require \$1,000,000 in renovation costs. Other investment areas derive from a perceived lack of parking and new tractor-trailer parking on Snelling, which eliminates on-street parking.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge is planning to collaborate with the Lake Street Council and Longfellow Rising for an art installation series focused on the Third Precinct in the spring of 2023. Other opportunities for collaboration and partnership are encouraged.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: In the Heart of the Beast Theatre
Key Contacts: Michelle Pett
Location: 1500 East Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55407

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To bring people together for the common good through the power of puppet and mask performance.

Brief History:

Founded in 1973, In the Heart of the Beast hosts original puppetry theater productions and other creative performances first formed as a grassroots collective in opposition to the Vietnam War. The May Day Festival, a signature organization event, was on hiatus in recent years until it was revived in 2022.

Service Area:

In the Heart of the Beast directly serves the Phillips neighborhood and the South Minneapolis community. A particular focus is placed on serving local artists who identify as BIPOC and/or queer.

Facilities:

Most programming is held at Avalon Theater on Lake Street, which was not damaged during the uprising and remained an anchor for the local arts community. Avalon Theater is the last historic theater on Lake Street, currently valued at approximately \$3,300,000.

Budget and Staffing:

During the pandemic, staff was furloughed for seven months, and many did not return when operations resumed. The core administrative staff was reduced from five FTEs to three, with key departures in the development department. The annual operating budget for the organization is estimated to be <\$1,000,000.

Lake Street Involvement:

The first May Day Parade & Festival took place in the spring of 1975 and grew to become a major community celebration on Lake Street attended by tens of thousands each year. The event was canceled in 2020 due to operational capacity challenges but returned in 2022 alongside key community partners. In the Heart of the Beast is a deeply collaborative organization with several community partners. For example, the 2022 May Day Festival included MIGIZI, Roosevelt High School, and Kalpulli KetzalCoatlucue. In the Heart of the Beast recognizes Lake Street as a community arts hub. Notably, the organization's work emphasizes support for BIPOC and queer artists in the Powderhorn and Phillips neighborhoods as a core area of focus.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

Following a stretch of turbulent operational challenges in the past few years, an executive search is currently being conducted. The forthcoming leader will be tasked with developing a sustainable business model for the future. A BIPOC-led consulting firm has been retained to lead recruitment efforts. The organization was able to sustain its work during the past few years through significant bequest gifts and coordinated savings efforts during the pandemic.

Program Areas:

In the Heart of the Beast leads a range of community workshops, often with social justice themes, and is held both online and in-person. In addition, community collaborations and the annual May Day Festival continue to be programmatic priorities for the future.

Special Initiatives:

Resources are focused on two key areas: programmatic sustainability and growing staff capacity. For example, Hennepin Theatre Trust is in conversation to co-facilitate some operational aspects of event productions like box

office management and marketing. The organization aspires to produce at least three major events or shows each year, in addition to events led by partner organizations, to keep the Avalon Theater activated most weeks of the year. In the Heart of the Beast is pursuing a three-year strategic plan focusing on refining its mission to nurture creative empowerment through performance and education. Critical to its work will be an investment in BIPOC and queer artists from the community, deeper partnerships with local schools, and considerations of online programming.

Barriers to Success:

Renovations to the Avalon Theater are a priority for the near future. The facility has been retrofitted in the past for staged productions but cannot physically sustain its role as a community space at large. Initial estimates for renovation are roughly \$100,000 in immediate capital needs. The next renovation phase includes working with architecture and engineering firms to replace the current roof with a solar panel, estimated at \$200,000. Other physical barriers include accessibility in the auditorium and restrooms, which is estimated to range between \$1.5 million and \$2 million.

Catalytic Investments:

Parking is a major challenge for the organization, especially as family-oriented programming attracts larger audiences outside the neighborhood. Concurrently, safety concerns have deterred visitors, and the response to these concerns has been equally challenging, such as facilities having armed security guards that make some visitors feel unsafe and past performers being harmed while going to their cars. Investments in lighting and streetscape are viewed as an initial approach to address these challenges, while comprehensive tools to support unhoused individuals and those with substance use challenges are viewed as a transformative way to mitigate crime.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Advancing the Corridor:

Avalon Theater is a large, attractive, and welcoming space for community events that can contribute to cohesion on Lake Street. In the Heart of the Beast is interested in building co-marketing opportunities for the different types of organizations and experiences in the corridor. In the Heart of the Beast is pursuing public relations support that is aligned with Midtown Global Market to work closely with its activities and vendors.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Ingebretsen's Scandinavian Gifts & Foods
Key Contacts: Anna Bloomstrand
Location: 1601 E Lake St, Minneapolis, MN 55407

MISSION

Mission Statement:
No formal mission statement.

Brief History:
Founded in 1921, Ingebretsen's Scandinavian Gifts & Foods' flagship store houses an original butcher shop and an extensive retail shop that offers Scandinavian-derived items from housewares to toys to traditional craft tools & supplies. The family business is currently moving from its third to fourth generation of ownership.

Service Area:
Ingebretsen's Scandinavian Gifts & Foods specializes in Nordic cultural goods.

Facilities:
The commercial facility has been the point of operation since the company was founded. Currently, a portion of the available facility space is unused or under-used because of renovation needs.

Budget and Staffing:
Information on budget and staffing was not provided.

Lake Street Involvement:
Lake Street is identified as a century-old Main Street for New Americans. There are specific concerns for small businesses on the corridor, especially for low-income entrepreneurs.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:
Capital support is the major need for the operational capacity of Ingebretsen's Scandinavian Gifts & Foods.

Program Areas:
Ingebretsen's values historical traditions and present-day innovations in Nordic design and sustainability. This is reflected in the products they sell and their interaction with the local community. They host regular events that celebrate Scandinavian culture, heritage, and education.

Special Initiatives:
The company expressed a sense of responsibility for being a multigenerational immigrant business and investing in strategies to support New Americans.

Barriers to Success:
Two major capital renovations are needed to advance the company's work. The first is the apartments above the storefront, which would be a great environment for developing studio spaces or offices and is estimated to cost \$175,000. Second, a large warehouse space that is currently used for parking could be better utilized as a commercial kitchen with shared community use.

Catalytic Investments:
Many overlooked services and utilities were identified as important areas of investment like coordinated garbage pick-up, improved landscaping, and added lighting at the pedestrian level. The desire to have a welcoming environment that is well cared for underscores any future decisions. Relatedly, the perception of Lake Street is difficult to combat because of the real and visible neglect of the corridor.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Advancing the Corridor:
Ingebretsen's Scandinavian Gifts & Foods is committed to providing a cultural space for their lineage and supporting immigrant families in the same way that their family benefited from previous political and social systems.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Latino Economic Development Center
Key Contacts: Henry Jiménez
Location: 804 Margaret St, Saint Paul, MN 55106

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To be an association of Latino entrepreneurs and leaders in the state of Minnesota whose members' drive, passion, and know-how to create a burgeoning Latino business community that serves as the foundation for good quality of life.

Brief History:

Founded in 2003, Latino Economic Development Center was created by Latinos, for Latinos, to provide classes, workshops, one-on-one assistance, agricultural assistance services, a kitchen incubator, and loans as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI).

Service Area:

Latino Economic Development Center is one of roughly 35 CDFIs in the state. It is an ethnic, membership-based CDFI certified as an Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) by the U.S. Department of Treasury, by the Minnesota State Council of OICs, and by OIC America.

Facilities:

The institution is based in the East Side Enterprise Center building in Saint Paul.

Budget and Staffing:

Latino Economic Development Center has a staff of 12, a volunteer board of 11 individuals, and roughly \$3,000,000 in net assets (as of 2020).

Lake Street Involvement:

Latino Economic Development Center believes there is already a transformed cultural and commercial district on East Lake, but the key challenge will be sustaining it for the businesses moving forward. The corridor is described as a "one-stop shop" for everything from taxes to optometrists, restaurants to human services. The prominence of Latinx businesses and organizations are a component of Lake Street's identity, but the global nature of the corridor is the most valuable aspect of its future development. Partners like CLUES, La Oportunidad, Pillsbury, and local high schools were identified as important complements to the economic development work needed.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

As challenges continue for the Latinx community on Lake Street and in the greater Twin Cities, sustaining the institution as a loan maker with a ceiling of \$5,000,000 will not holistically serve the needs of business owners. Scaling up loan capacity will help prepare local groups who need support.

Program Areas:

Latino Economic Development Center is a pioneer in supporting aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners using field-tested tools. It provides a complete one-stop agricultural business program for clients, offers loan assistance to small and medium-sized businesses located in Minnesota, and serves as a hub for adult education in Spanish in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

Special Initiatives:

A "Taco Tour" was held in the past as a community engagement tool for Lake Street. While successful, it was a resource-intensive effort that can ideally transfer over to a local organization in the community moving forward.

Barriers to Success:

Access to capital is the most urgent need for the Lake Street community and Latino Economic Development Center's aspirations for the corridor. The problem is viewed as two-fold; first, there is a need to deploy money in a safe, secure, and responsible way that doesn't spur debt challenges for entrepreneurs; and second, building generational wealth will require 0-0% ("zero-to-zero percent") interest models. Even with 2-3% interest in loans, which is a common benchmark, there are still struggles to meet expenses and grow wealth. Alternately, banks often have a 7-8% interest model, which is viewed as inequitable for the Lake Street community.

Catalytic Investments:

Future strategies for the corridor need to encompass movement for the businesses and identify ways to bring in more residents and visitors. Central to this concern is the need for marketing for the attractions of Lake Street, which the Lake Street Council has led effectively, but more commercial support is needed. Peer organizations like Greater MSP were identified as potential partners that could elevate the role of commercial marketing. All of the institution's clients on Lake Street need more foot traffic, and tactics like family events and "field trips" for the public are useful. There also needs to be a way to weave traditional loans with forgivable loans, technical assistance, and other tools to address the community's needs. For Lake Street organizations to be sustainable in the long term, at least \$25 million will be required for program support only.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

Latino Economic Development Center is a member of the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD-MN), the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN), the National Association of Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB), and the Rural Coalition (RuralCo). Through these affiliations and its deep history in the community, the institution's role in advancing the corridor will focus on specific economic development strategies, and advocacy for larger federal stimulus (e.g., ARPA funds) needed to sustain commercial efforts. Other groups like the Ground Break Coalition were identified as leading important initiatives that could be beneficial for the cultural corridor.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Latino Museum of Minnesota
Key Contacts: Sandra Vargas
Location: No permanent space

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To enrich the cultural presence of the Latino community in Minnesota and the Twin Cities in particular [unofficial mission]

Brief History:

The Latino Museum of Minnesota is still in its planning phase and will feature the contributions of Latinos in Minnesota's culture and economy. Driving the project is a desire to differentiate between the existing ecosystem where Latino culture takes place toward a more formal legacy that reshapes the state's cultural identity and understanding of itself.

Service Area:

While the project focuses on the contributions of the Latino community in Minnesota, its services will be a gathering point to learn about the history of Latinos in the state and center cultural empowerment for the Latino community. The location spanning from KMart to Minnehaha was historically a gateway for Latino immigrants, and they are the most prominent cultural community present on the corridor.

Facilities:

A facilities plan has not yet been developed but advisory leadership is guiding the process. Currently, learning from peer organizations like the Russian Museum, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and the Swedish Institute are helping steer planning efforts. The facility will eventually include a gallery space to host a collection. A goal of facility ownership is also important for the project, as it will provide an authentic experience to build and sustain social capital for the community.

Budget and Staffing:

The Latino Museum of Minnesota is estimated to be a \$12-\$15 million effort when fully scaled, which is greatly dependent on the site of future development.

Lake Street Involvement:

Partnerships are a big part of the vision for the Latino Museum of Minnesota. Exploratory conversations with entities like the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the University of Minnesota are laying the groundwork for deeper community collaboration in the future. Lake Street was described as entrepreneurial and an economic development corridor that produces the second largest grossing commercial revenue in the state.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

Some initial grant funding will advance key goals for the project in the coming year, but more staff and technical assistance support will be needed. Long-term, the project will need funds for building maintenance and contingency issues.

Program Areas:

N/A

Special Initiatives:

N/A

Barriers to Success:

Operating cash and leadership capacity are the top priorities for the Latino Museum of Minnesota. The project has been volunteer-led since its iteration. Systems change is also a concern when navigating development issues, and concepts like Community Benefits Agreements that are typical with large construction (e.g., stadiums) may need policy adaptations to reflect community needs in smaller-scale development like the museum project.

Catalytic Investments:

Investment in cultural infrastructure (versus branding) that provides social leadership components is a critical need for the project. With a distinct focus on the state's cultural heritage, the Latino Museum of Minnesota is interested in the Legacy Amendment as a source of future funding that could be leveraged both statewide and by local governments. Private sector dollars will also need to be mobilized for the project to advance.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

The Latino Museum of Minnesota is focused on recentring culture beyond race. There is push-back to the idea of marketing being a primary lever for the future of the corridor, as it often centers the needs and comfort of people from outside the corridor rather than amplifying the experiences and resilience of residents and entrepreneurs. In addition, places along Lake Street would benefit from hiring Latino leaders to have a voice on the "inside" of development conversations, which would also embolden a Latino-led narrative for the corridor.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: League of Longfellow Artists
Key Contacts: Stephen Clark
Location: No permanent location

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To partner with neighborhood arts organizations, nonprofits, small businesses, and residents to design and host a variety of events and activities that support Longfellow artists at any stage in their creative lives, and invite and encourage community participation in the arts.

Brief History:

Founded in 2009, The League of Longfellow Artists (LoLa) began as a small grassroots effort to raise the visibility of artists living or working in the Greater Longfellow Neighborhood of South Minneapolis. The organization now flourishes as the producer of an annual art crawl with more than a hundred neighborhood artists working in various forms of media. In 2017, the LoLa became a registered nonprofit and primarily works through fiscal sponsorship.

Service Area:

Membership and audiences for LoLa events are concentrated in the Longfellow neighborhood of South Minneapolis.

Facilities:

While a permanent space for LoLa has not been secured, its model is based on being a federation that is immersed in the neighborhood. For example, the LoLa Art Crawl operates out of individuals' homes, backyards, and studios.

Budget and Staffing:

LoLa operates with an annual budget of roughly \$10,000, which hinges on the success of the Art Crawl. A team of approximately 6 core staff serves as a steering committee for LoLa with a key focus on the Art Crawl in September. All staff members are volunteers. Despite some changes in leadership over its tenure, LoLa has a strong membership base that has rallied to sustain the organization's work. Operational sustainability would be improved by adding a paid project coordinator to manage annual events.

Lake Street Involvement:

LoLa partners with Longfellow Business Association to create connections between the artists they serve and small businesses in the neighborhood.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

Sponsorships are a major revenue source to fund specific activities and events. Fiduciary sponsorship opportunities with Springboard for the Arts and Longfellow Business Association are also effective for the organization.

Program Areas:

The LoLa Art Crawl is a friendly neighborhood art tour among the bungalows, gardens, and small indie businesses of the Longfellow neighborhood of Minneapolis. LoLa artists and makers show and sell their work at homes and businesses throughout the neighborhood, with many sites hosting two or more artists together. All sites, both indoors and outside, are open to the public at no cost to visitors.

Special Initiatives:

During the off-season of the Art Crawl, the LoLa Winter Fine Arts Exhibition takes place over two weekends in late winter. Member artists are invited to exhibit their work at the neighborhood arts venue Squirrel Haus Arts.

Barriers to Success:

Limited staff capacity for major annual events is a notable barrier to LoLa's success. In the future, the organization


hopes to develop a leadership board and assign specific committees to lead events. Greater technical support is desired to navigate funding opportunities. Similarly, pro bono legal and marketing support would be useful for the field to help incubate coalition activities and develop mutual aid models for small businesses.

Catalytic Investments:

A long-term vision for LoLa is to help transform the Third Precinct site into a memorial for healing, similar to what's taking place at 38th and Chicago. Furthermore, reinvestment in decentralized autonomous neighborhood support is critical as it is at risk of disappearing due to the lack of government accountability. Safety and effective signage are also areas of concern for the organization.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

LoLa aspires to be an inviting presence in the community and offers cultural makers a space to collaborate. The organization is open to further partnerships and opportunities to promote greater visibility for the corridor's arts and culture ecosystem.



ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Midtown Greenway Coalition

Key Contacts: Soren Jensen

Location: 2834 10th Ave S, Greenway Level, Ste 2, Minneapolis, MN 55407

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To empower communities to develop, improve, protect, and enjoy the Midtown Greenway as a green urban corridor to improve people's lives.

Brief History:

Founded in 1995, the Midtown Greenway Coalition emerged in the late 1980s from meetings between neighborhood leaders along Lake Street. Development of the Midtown Greenway took place from 2000 to 2007 as part of collaborative efforts from the Coalition and other organizations in the Lake Street Greenway Partnership. The Midtown Greenway has since become one of the busiest bikeways in Minnesota and is recognized as a premier urban bike trail in the nation.

Service Area:

While the Greenway serves the general public, it is typically utilized by cyclists and pedestrians.

Facilities:

The Midtown Greenway Coalition operates from an office building neighboring the Midtown Greenway. The Greenway itself is a 5.5-mile-long former railroad corridor in south Minneapolis with bicycling and walking trails. The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority owns it, and the City of Minneapolis maintains the trails.

Budget and Staffing:

The organization is led by one paid staff person and a large volunteer pool. Partnerships with local businesses like East Lake Brewery are utilized for events. Past funding from Lake Street Council was essential for the Midtown Greenway Coalition, notably for its recognition of the major barriers to launching public art projects.

Lake Street Involvement:

The Greenway Glow Arts Festival has been operating at the Midtown Greenway for over a decade. The event convenes local artists along the trail and invites the community to enjoy community art and an outdoor stage, with event hubs in Seward, Midtown, and the Mosaic Art Park in Midtown. According to the Midtown Greenway Coalition, the greatest asset to Lake Street is the diversity of cultures, particularly the restaurants and cultural experiences available to the community. A "pancultural" branding effort for the corridor is needed, similar to how 'Eat Street' on Nicollet Avenue developed a shared identity to be marketed.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

The Midtown Greenway is owned by Hennepin County Regional Railway and subcontracts with the city to maintain the trail. The Minneapolis Park Board is anticipated to lead some management activities in the future, including Cepro Park.

Program Areas:

The Coalition operates many different projects, particularly those focusing on public art in the Midtown Greenway, to advance social equity in the community. For example, sourcing and hiring local artists of color to lead public art activities like murals are critical in making the Greenway more welcoming while also reflecting the diversity of the community.

Special Initiatives:

Beyond the Greenway Glow Arts Festival, other public arts activities are being developed for the Midtown Greenway. For example, a solar-powered art installation has been proposed for the top of the 18th Ave Greenway ramp that will emit light from the top of a sculpture.

Barriers to Success:

The City's approval process for public art can be challenging. One example shared identified past proposals that were denied because artists were offering their services pro bono, and the City has a relatively firm stance on paying artists for their work. In general, seeking funding for arts activities is viewed as the most acute barrier for the Coalition. The landscape of available philanthropic opportunities for Lake Street nonprofits is extremely competitive, which limits the overall impact of the collective arts network on the corridor.

Catalytic Investments:

Compensating artists for their time continues to be a major struggle for the Coalition. Much of the art and labor is donated with some help from corporate sponsors to offset costs. Funding for multi-year collaborative art projects is needed. Wayfinding and signage remain areas of possible improvement, which will hopefully be addressed with the Park Board's leadership on the Greenway. Cepro Park is also a site worth examining and may serve the community better with a ramp development in front of the Sheraton Hotel. With the perception of safety as another primary concern, it is hard to prioritize any development opportunities beyond that core need. However, smaller coordinated activities like walking groups are viewed as a way to mitigate such concerns. In addition, as a primary actor on the corridor, the Lake Street Greenway Partnership is viewed as only beginning to tap into its own power and potential.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

The Greenway is recognized as an important transit corridor for Lake Street and is the most utilized bike facility in the region. There is a clear desire to see the Greenway and the Lake Street community collaborate to uplift neighbors and advance a more welcoming environment. Central to this objective will be streamlining the process of receiving funding for art projects and keeping businesses thriving.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: MIGIZI
Key Contacts: Kelly Drummer
Location: 2610 E 32nd St, Minneapolis, MN 55406 (temporary location)

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To provide a strong circle of support that nurtures the educational, social, economic, and cultural development of American Indian youth.

Brief History:

Founded in 1977, MIGIZI (f/k/a Migizi Communications, Inc.) was launched with the goal of countering misrepresentations and inaccuracies about Native people in the media. MIGIZI's first weekly radio production, The Native American Program, set the stage for First Person Radio and its nationally distributed programming. Today, First Person Productions is a multimedia training effort for Native youth to provide state-of-the-art storytelling skills, enhance self-esteem, and improve academic performance. Additional MIGIZI efforts address youth needs in jobs, culture, and leadership.

Service Area:

MIGIZI serves 250+ American Indian youth annually, with a large concentration of program participants from South High School.

Facilities:

MIGIZI previously owned a building on 31st and Lake until 2015, when the building was sold. Following a few short transitions in new locations on Lake Street, a final move was made to a facility on 27th Avenue. Less than a year following a capital campaign and major renovations, the building was lost during the 2020 uprising. A temporary facility has been in use for roughly two years while construction occurs at a new location on 18th Street and Lake Street in the former Little Brothers of the Elderly building.

Budget and Staffing:

The organization employs roughly 10 staff and has expanded operations since the loss of its building, in part due to an uptick in donations. Key staff positions in fundraising, marketing, and other administrative roles grew the operating budget to roughly \$1-2 million.

Lake Street Involvement:

MIGIZI has been located on Lake Street since the early 1990s. There are strong connections with South High School and the American Indian Education at Minneapolis Public Schools more broadly. Aside from MIGIZI, Division of Indian Work is the only other organization on Lake focused solely on education and cultural leadership for American Indian youth.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

More than \$6 million was raised to construct a new facility at 18th and Lake. Construction has been in process since March 2022 and is anticipated to be completed by summer 2023.

Program Areas:

MIGIZI offers paid learning opportunities for youth focused on social media marketing and media, STEM education, sustainable and green energies, academic support, and school partnerships.

Special Initiatives:

Transitioning into a new facility is the main focus of the organization and is recognized as a major undertaking. Generally, moving toward a drop-in model is desired for the future, with events hosted on the weekends. MIGIZI is

interested in being more creative with operating and providing services. Goals are formally determined through a strategic planning process with the board and staff. Youth are central to strategy development and help frame the organization's vision and assessment of success.

Barriers to Success:


Youth being served by MIGIZI are facing compounding challenges, particularly with the effect of the pandemic. Many feel disengaged as a result of prolonged isolation. These challenges also offer an opportunity to develop the new facility in a way that is exciting and welcoming to young people. For example, space for recording studios and computer labs are planned for the new location.

Catalytic Investments:

Safety is the top priority for MIGIZI, noting that many young people who attend programs feel unsafe on Lake. Because of the close proximity to South High School, MIGIZI is interested in developing a walkable, thriving, and safe corridor for its community.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

It is critical that the future of Lake Street considers the perspective of youth that live, shop, and go to school along the corridor. With this in mind, MIGIZI hopes to continue employing, supporting, and nurturing young people



ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Moon Palace Books
Key Contacts: Jamie Schwesnedl
Location: 3032 Minnehaha Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55406

MISSION

Mission Statement:

No formal mission statement.

Brief History:

Founded in 1921, Ingebretsen's Scandinavian Gifts & Foods' flagship store houses an original butcher shop and an extensive retail shop that offers Scandinavian-derived items from housewares to toys to traditional craft tools & supplies. The family business is currently moving from its third to fourth generation of ownership.

Service Area:

Moon Palace Books serves the general public in the greater Twin Cities area.

Facilities:

The building that Moon Palace Books operates from is in manageable shape. However, the navigation of city services has been an ongoing challenge. For example, road expansion led to increased fees for snow removal, traffic crossways have been inaccessible, and citations for graffiti have become a nuisance.

Budget and Staffing:

Staffing for events is an ongoing challenge, especially as many events are on hiatus and the cafe area is closed. Before the pandemic, the biggest issue for Moon Palace Books was managing inquiries for the venue space.

Lake Street Involvement:

Moon Palace Books identifies Lake Street, particularly from Nicollet to the river, as the most diverse, vibrant, and interesting stretch of business, residential, and industrial areas in the region. The abundance of languages is valued, and the plurality of cultural communities is a critical aspect of the corridor's success.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

Retail operations have specific training and inflow/outflow needs that can impede Moon Palace Books' ability to expand staff capacity.

Program Areas:

While the event schedule has been significantly limited since the pandemic, Moon Palace Books currently hosts book clubs on various themes and topics.

Special Initiatives:

As a business operation, Moon Palace Books does not have any special initiatives currently planned.

Barriers to Success:

There is a sentiment that the City penalizes business owners for small issues (e.g., a promotional sandwich board outside was deemed too big, etc.), further contributing to a tenuous relationship with public officials. These challenges stem partly from the unclear jurisdictions of Lake, Hiawatha, and Minnehaha as county or state roads, leading to ambiguity and deniability on who is in charge.

Catalytic Investments:

The biggest investment needed, according to Moon Palace Books leadership, is the demolition of the Third Precinct site and its transformation into a community space. For example, the site would be valuable as an amphitheater with

publicly accessible green space. Moon Palace Books finds the 2+ years of the site being boarded up with barbed wire and concrete barriers as an eyesore that has yet to be addressed. From a business perspective, more accessible parking and easier walkways to navigate at the intersections of Lake/Hiawatha and Lake/Minnehaha are needed. Overall, the corridor does not feel pedestrian-friendly, especially in the winter when sidewalks are not shoveled. In addition, because so many parks are tucked away in neighborhoods, there is a significant need for venue spaces to gather and rentable spaces for meetings.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Advancing the Corridor:

Moon Palace Books is represented on the board of Longfellow Rising, and leaders regularly engage with Lake Street Council and local Rotary Clubs. The business' goal for community cohesion is to continue being involved in development discussions and leverage the facility as a conduit for keeping neighbors informed. The streamlining and consolidation of information will be key in this regard.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Quatrefoil Library
Key Contacts: Paul Kaefer
Location: 1220 East Lake St, Minneapolis, MN 55407

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To be a community center that cultivates the free exchange of ideas and makes accessible LGBTQ+ materials for education and inspiration.

Brief History:

Founded in 1986, Quatrefoil first opened in North Minneapolis before moving to St. Paul in 1987 and then East Lake Street in 2013. The library has stood as a gathering point for those in the queer community and is increasingly recognized as a community event space for the LGBTQIA+ community in Twin Cities.

Service Area:

Quatrefoil focuses on services and programming for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Facilities:

Located in the Spirit on Lake Building, Quatrefoil's 2,700-square-foot space on Lake serves as a library and community center. It was designed to be a small library, and the space shares building tenancy with residential units. While the current space is not viewed as being outgrown, it is nearing capacity as the library collection continues to expand.

Budget and Staffing:

Quatrefoil is volunteer-run and does not have typical business hours, given the limited staffing capacity. The operating budget is roughly \$70,000 annually, and major expenses are rent and programming costs.

Lake Street Involvement:

Local partners and peer organizations to Quatrefoil include Midtown Global Market, In the Heart of the Beast, and Red Door Clinic. There are also collaborative relationships with the East Lake Library, particularly as a resource for additional collections and other one-off partnerships. The corridor's diverse community working together is a core characteristic fueled by activities from the area's Latinx population and the neighboring Islamic Community Center. The Midtown Greenway is also recognized as a major asset, and events like Open Streets offer needed opportunities for community cohesion.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

The capacity of Quatrefoil is limited because of its volunteer model and dependence on local philanthropy. More than 5,000 volunteer hours are tracked per year. There is a clear desire to "unlock" more Lake Street-focused opportunities for support.

Program Areas:

The library hosts meetings, book author readings, and countless clubs and meet-ups.

Special Initiatives:

Quatrefoil recently launched an e-book and audio collection. A broader goal for the organization is to grow more partnerships and collaborate on specific events.

Barriers to Success:


Success for the organization relies on a strong volunteer base, and filling volunteer gaps is always a priority. The prospective addition of paid staff would likely require more space or relocation, though no plans to relocate are currently being considered. Another challenge is operating with predominantly white leadership and meeting the critical goal of greater community representation.

Catalytic Investments:

Addressing safety, particularly the perception of safety, is essential for Lake Street's future. Core to this is a strategy to support unhoused people in the community. However, community-focused safety tactics are desired over police intervention. Resources to develop a peer council of organizations and community partners would also be valuable for future development and activities.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

Quatrefoil is open to offering services and meeting space as part of the cohesion efforts for Lake Street. There are likely additional resources that could be leveraged with regard to the specific community needs that may emerge in the future.



ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization: Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts
Key Contacts: Patrick Cabello Hansel
Location: 2742 15th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55407

MISSION

Mission Statement:

To train both individual artists and groups that want to develop art programming in their communities.

Brief History:

Founded in the early 2000s, Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts began as a program of St. Paul's Lutheran Church before affiliating as a nonprofit. Semilla means "seed" in Spanish, and the organization's goal was to plant seeds of hope in the community. Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts works to build community through quality arts programming that integrates creative practice with leadership and youth development, greening, and holistic health initiatives. In particular, the organization has especially tried to reach people who do not have access to high-quality arts programming, including people with limited English language skills and those with mental health challenges.

Service Area:

The organization primarily serves the Phillips neighborhood of South Minneapolis and neighboring communities.

Facilities:

Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts is based in a church built in the early 20th Century. Discussions are taking place about renovations for the facility and what is feasible for the future. Transitioning into a mobile operation is also being considered. Roughly \$1,000,000 in upgrades are needed to accommodate a new boiler, heating and air conditioning, a commercial kitchen, internet expansion, and other eco-friendly renovations.

Budget and Staffing:

Working with an operating budget of roughly \$75,000, Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts has limited part-time program staff and one executive leader. Summer programs have more hired staff positions for seasonal work.

Lake Street Involvement:

The organization hosts several mobile workshops with partners like Midtown Global Market, Stewart Park, and Pioneer Cemetery. Other peer organizations that the organization affiliates with include local schools (South, Roosevelt, Andersen, Banyan) and the East Phillips Improvement Coalition. There is a desire to facilitate more visual marketing of the neighborhood, such as mosaics, signage, and art on utility boxes.

PRIORITIES & ASPIRATIONS

Operations and Capacity:

The organization's capacity depends on consistent fundraising revenue to support program development. There is a track record for securing grants, but the need for dedicated fundraising staff continues to be a concern.

Program Areas:

Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts has led several community-based art activities, including planting pollinator-attracting gardens, preparing youth for leadership and employment, and engaging people in creating art to transform the neighborhood. In 2006, the first "Guerrilla Garage" mural was painted as a response to graffiti in the neighborhood and has since grown to 25 murals in Phillips and beyond. A partnership with In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre has emerged for the co-production of La Natividad, a bilingual telling of the Christmas story from the point of view of an immigrant family in the neighborhood.

Special Initiatives:

In 2008, Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts began the annual Taste of Phillips Art Festival, which celebrates the diversity of culture of the Phillips neighborhood.

Barriers to Success:

One barrier to participation for the Phillips community is language, and Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts address that through the presence of bilingual staff and using bilingual and image-rich promotional and training materials. Other barriers are the divisions and lack of trust that are sometimes present in the community itself. This is especially critical for undocumented immigrants, who must navigate daily a world that is not always accepting of them. The organization has intentionally partnered with groups that support immigrants to address this challenge.

Catalytic Investments:

A priority for the organization is exploring the issue of community safety beyond policing. According to the organization, there was a point in time when federal funding supported meaningful community engagement from officers on the beat and aided neighborhood organizations with challenges of crime. However, the relationship between the community and the police has become more elusive. Support for immigrant communities on Lake Street is also a major concern for the organization. The role of art in addressing these issues is key, as the organization believes it is important in promoting safety, and frequent pop-up events help connect the community. Examples include Open Streets and events at Midtown Global Market, but the emphasis should be on frequency over event size.

CORRIDOR CONTRIBUTIONS**Advancing the Corridor:**

The organization is uniquely positioned to do smaller visual art activities in the neighborhood, which are less time and resource intensive. A current plan is emerging to design images that reflect the neighborhood's vision and are replicated through various mediums. Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts views these efforts as an important tactic for community cohesion.