

# when ARTISTS break ground

lessons from  
a Cleveland  
neighborhood  
partnership



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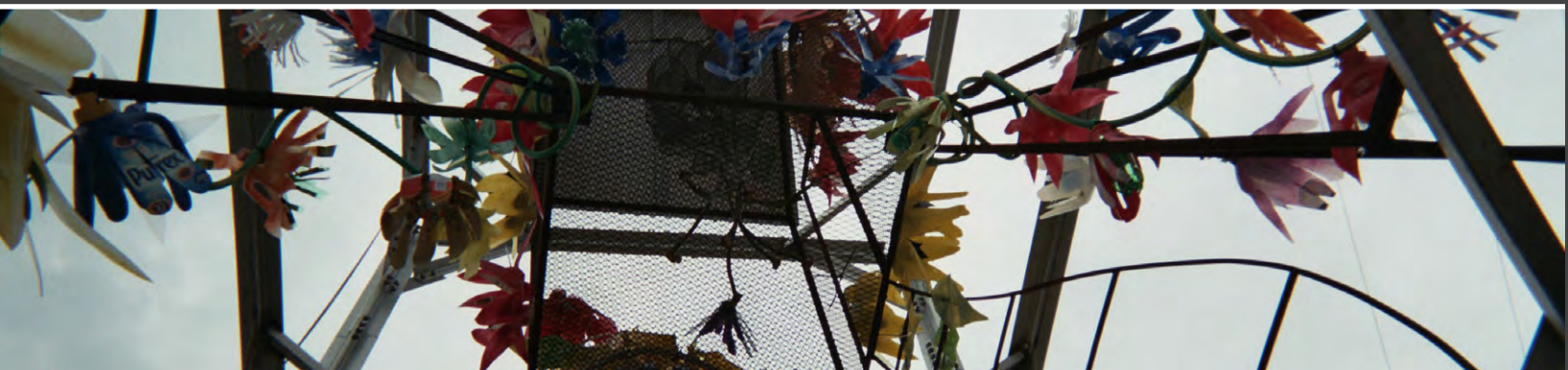
Collinwood Photo Project; photo by Ashley Smith



Collinwood Photo Project; photo by Regina Nethery



Collinwood Photo Project; photo by Liam Kelley



Collinwood Photo Project; photo by Regina Nethery

# what happens when artists break ground?

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Waterloo Road under construction

If you took a turn onto Waterloo Road today, creative placemaking might not be the first thing that would spring to your mind. You'd probably notice there's only a single lane of one-way traffic and that the remaining road – and most of the sidewalks are torn up. There are bulldozers and piles of gravel and construction workers. What's so creative about that?

Dig a little deeper and you'll see a community that more and more every day is thriving, and where artists are playing an important role in that success. That construction you're seeing? It's a \$5.5 million overhaul of the streets of the Waterloo Arts District, infrastructure to improve the pedestrian experience for visitors and residents alike. It's an investment that the City of Cleveland and the State of Ohio probably wouldn't have made, were it not for the investment artists were already making here.

Look beyond the construction, and you'll see the Slovenian Workmen's Home, a 95-year-old cultural institution that's served as a steward of neighborhood heritage since it was first built, and still delivers a killer polka dance party. You'll see Waterloo Arts, which for the past decade has been leveraging the arts and educational programs to bring Collinwood residents and workers of all backgrounds together and build community.

Just down the street, is the Beachland Ballroom. When Cindy Barber first bought an old Croatian social hall and converted it into this indie rock venue in 2000, people thought she was a little crazy. The street was considered a haven for prostitution and drug trade, and it sat 40% vacant. But the folks behind the Beachland Ballroom, Waterloo Arts, Music Saves, Blue Arrow Records and the dozens of other arts groups and related businesses that followed had a vision. They had energy and conviction and were willing to make sacrifices as they went about building something special.

Today, Collinwood's Waterloo Arts District is almost fully occupied. Artists both local and national are flocking in to buy houses that just 5 years ago might have faced the wrecking ball. They're covering the streets in murals, sculptures, sidewalk stencils, and gardens. They're developing after-school programming for neighborhood kids and writing poems to help neighborhood seniors tell their story. Where others see ugly, vacant lots or phone booths with their works torn out, they see opportunities for a walk-in movie theater or a gallery for miniature artworks.

This is the Collinwood that's under construction today, one part industrial history and one part indie arts scene, one part major investment, one part piece-by-piece, house-by-house revitalization; all parts citizen-driven, grassroots change.



This is the place where we've had the great fortune of doing our work. With an initial award from Leveraging Investments in Creativity as part of its Creative Communities program, funded by the Kresge Foundation and the Ford Foundation in 2011, Community Partnership for Arts and Culture joined forces with Northeast Shores Development Corporation, and the building of new artist support programs to bolster the energy that was already apparent in the amazing Collinwood neighborhood began.

Our programming is just one piece of a much bigger puzzle. But it's programming that's touched the lives of artists seeking to relocate to a community that truly values creative people

*"I have been thoroughly satisfied with the programs I have taken advantage of. My life and my family's lives have all improved greatly because of the choice we made ... Thank you, Artists in Residence."*

And the lives of artists that have long called North Collinwood their home

*"I am very happy that our neighborhood was chosen for these initiatives - it makes me want to stay."*

*"I feel very lucky to live here, right now."*

It's had a profound effect on the staff members that contributed to its success

*"This has been a fantastic experience. My life has been transformed because of this opportunity."*

*"I know I have a different sensitivity towards the neighborhoods in Cleveland than I did. The more I can understand what we have and what we are trying to change, the better."*

And it speaks to a broader community momentum, far beyond the reaches of our programs, to the efforts of groups like Waterloo Arts

*"The attendance at the Waterloo Arts Fest was the highest I've ever seen it. Even for people who don't move here, people are visiting more."*



The Beachland Ballroom and Tavern



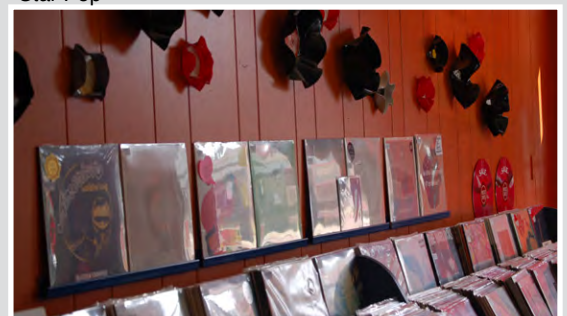
Azure Stained Glass Studio



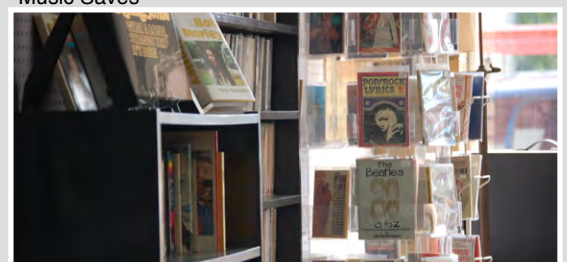
Slovenian Workmen's Home



Star Pop



Music Saves



Blue Arrow Records



Native Cleveland



Waterloo Arts



Waterloo 7 Gallery



Rebel City Tattoo Studio

Perhaps most importantly, it's the kind of experiment in community engagement and community revitalization that gets people talking about the broader picture of how we build strong artists, strong neighborhoods, and a strong society

*"I think that this program was a great idea. There is definitely a need for it in every area of our country. We artists and creative people come from everywhere and all walks of life [but] the world is really not set up for us. Artists have to find a place to survive and fulfill their need to explore their gifts and give back to the world the talents that have been bestowed to them. The world will be much richer and happier with us giving back to it."*

That's what this handbook is all about. It's about CPAC and Northeast Shores' experiences trying to build off of the existing magic already exploding across one amazing neighborhood, and our advice for how you can leverage grassroots energy, like in Collinwood, to support revitalization in your own community. It's about how we all can construct the type of community that we can be proud of, bulldozers and all.



Cleveland Lakefront State Park





CPAC and Northeast Shores are eternally grateful for all of the extraordinary time, energy and resources that made our artist investments in Collinwood possible. Credit starts with great staff and board members at both organizations; creative placemaking is at its best when many voices are engaged, and the voices of Northeast Shores and CPAC staff and board advanced our work in a significant way. Special thanks go to Seth Beattie, whose leadership in program design and execution contributed greatly to Artists in Residence and Collinwood Rising.

Of course, our work would not have been possible at all, were it not for the belief and support of an incredible group of funders. Artists in Residence happened as the result of the generous support of Leveraging Investments in Creativity, The Kresge Foundation, The Ford Foundation, NoteWorthy Federal Credit Union, The Educational Foundation of America, The George Gund Foundation, KeyBank, the Ohio Arts Council, Charter One Growing Communities and Dominion. Collinwood Rising has been made possible through the generous investment of The Kresge Foundation, ArtPlace, First Federal Lakewood and the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. Our organizations have also benefited from additional operating support that has enabled us to dream, plan and deliver. That support comes from The Cleveland Foundation, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, Councilman Michael Polensek, The George Gund Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, The Kulas Foundation, The John P. Murphy Foundation, the Ohio Arts Council and the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. We are truly thankful for these funders and the many, many placemaking projects (including our own) that they make possible.

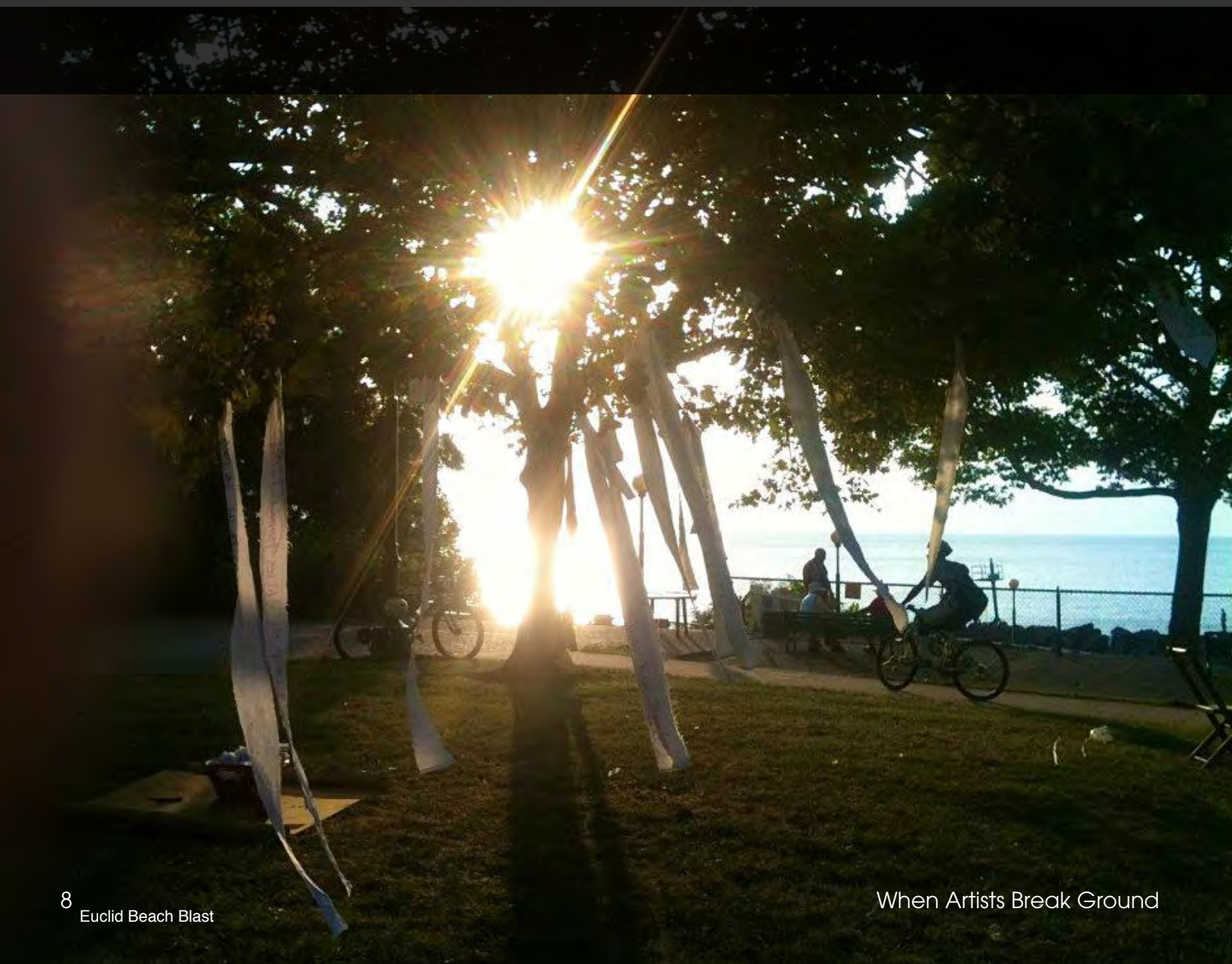
From the earliest days of exploring artist space issues in Cleveland, CPAC's efforts were helped by taskforces of talented and thoughtful people, whose insights and connections were essential to our creative placemaking work. Much credit for CPAC and Northeast Shores' tremendous partnership goes to the energy and time of these individuals, including Alenka Banco; Nelson Beckford; Dan Bush; Carrie Carpenter; Freddy Collier, Jr.; Brian Friedman; Colleen Gilson; Harriet Gould; Sarah Gyorki; Sheryl Hoffman; Chloe Hopson; Lillian Kuri; Marina Marquez; Stephanie McHenry; Marilyn Mosinski; John Mullaney; Tracey Nichols; Christine Nelson; Marcia Nolan; Greg Peckham; Angelica Pozo; Judilee Reed; Bobbi Reichtell; Mikelann Ward Rensel; James Rokakis; Wendy Sattin; John Schoeniger; Sabra Pierce Scott; Michael Taylor; Tony Sias; Gauri Torgalkar; Linda Warren; Bill Whitney; and Walter Wright. Thank you for your extraordinarily wise counsel.

We are also thankful for the strong backing of city, county, state and national officials who've been supportive of our efforts. We've been grateful to have wonderful public leadership supporting our work in Collinwood. In particular, Cleveland Councilman Michael Polensek has been a champion of Artists in Residence and Collinwood Rising, as well as a long-term advocate for the neighborhood and for the transformative power of the arts. His leadership has been an irreplaceable asset.

The real magic of our work has come from the extraordinary artists that we've had the fortune of working with. Groups like the Slovenian Workmen's Home, the Beachland Ballroom, Waterloo Arts and Cleveland Rocks have been visionaries for our community, so it's no surprise that they were also visionaries in our creative placemaking efforts. We've been amazed by and deeply appreciative of the dedication of new artist homeowners like Nathan Ehlers, AJ Lightsey and Emily Martis. Our hearts have been warmed when Doug Wood's guitar puts a smile on every kid in the room; when Linda Zolten Wood's painted rain barrels start a dialogue about water conservation; when Omid Tavakoli builds a sculpture garden from scratch; when Ivana Medukic turns an ugly vacant lot into a family movie night; and when another one of Jerry Schmidt's unique sculptures finds its way into the neighborhood. There are so many ways artists have contributed to our lives and our community. We just can't say thank you enough.

Finally, no list of thanks would be complete without acknowledging the people that make Collinwood the special place it is. We promise not to list the 16,761 of you who make your home here, or the thousands more who made it your place of business. But without you, our work truly couldn't happen. It's your determination, your investment and your scrappy, we-can-do-it spirit that have made this neighborhood one to root for.

With this all-star cast, success was certain. Artists are in residence and Collinwood is rising.





# about this handbook

Six years ago, CPAC started a conference series called Rust Belt to Artist Belt. The gathering's purpose was a simple one – to build knowledge about how artists can play a role in revitalizing industrial cities.

As we were starting to think about the intersections between artists and community development, a lot of the best practices we were reading were coming out of fast-growth, high-cost cities like Boston and San Francisco.

The models were great, but they didn't always match the same challenges and opportunities that cities like Cleveland and Detroit and St. Louis face. Our problems weren't generally about how to carve out affordability for people in neighborhoods; much of it was about not having enough people to populate neighborhoods in the first place.

CPAC started a conference to learn about what was happening in the industrial Midwest to help artists get involved in neighborhoods. Over four years, Rust Belt to Artist Belt brought together 600 people and celebrated the creative placemaking that was quietly taking our region by storm.

Countless projects like the Penn Avenue Arts Initiative and the Paducah Artist Relocation Program were inspirational. We learned how people were taking advantage of Midwest affordability to help artists take ownership of their property and how they were working to get artists more engaged, repositioning the Rust Belt as a laboratory for creative living.

In many ways, the CPAC and Northeast Shores partnership grew directly out of those conferences. And in many ways, this handbook is our thanks to the conference participants who helped us make Artists in Residence and Collinwood Rising better programs.

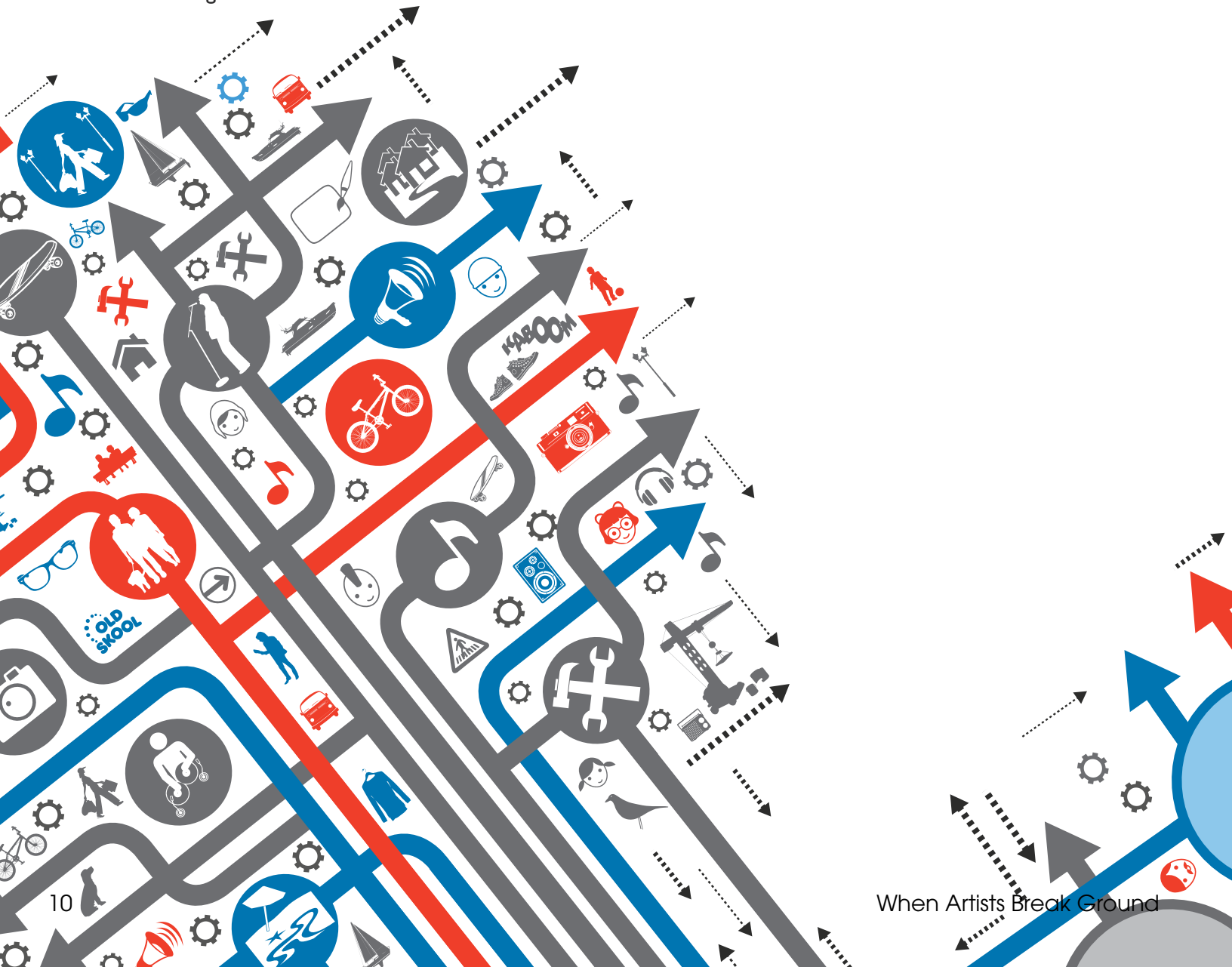
In the coming pages, we will share what we've learned in our work – 15 themes that have influenced our approach to working with artists in a neighborhood development context. We share how we've approached program planning, management, implementation, marketing and research. Some of the topics we'll cover will seem obvious. In many cases, they seemed obvious to us, too, but our experiences drove home how seemingly simple concepts ended up being critical to the outcomes of our work.



You'll read what staff members at Northeast Shores and CPAC contributed, as well as thoughts from the artists served. You'll read about some great successes and where people think certain aspects could improve. We've included results from our program research and will share some wise advice from some of the leading practitioners in the field.

Much of what we cover is universal, but in the end, creative placemaking is all about discovering the unique in a community. Our programming and research are based on the experiences of one relatively small group of people in one neighborhood at one point in time. You may find that some components of our work are less applicable to your own efforts than others. If you're working in a high-cost real estate market with low vacancy, our project work might not always align with the circumstances you face; if you're working in an older industrial city, you'll probably recognize a lot of the ground conditions that we experience here in Collinwood. Either way, hopefully you'll find plenty to spark dialogue and form new ideas in your community.

Whatever your placemaking journey has in store, just know that you'll always have friends at CPAC and Northeast Shores. And, we are happy to commiserate, brainstorm or just share a laugh.





# an overview



# about us

**For close to 17 years, CPAC** has been working to strengthen, unify and connect greater Cleveland's incredible arts and culture sector. It has led the charge to recognize, celebrate and support the cultural groups and artists that have been a driving force in this proud city since its earliest days of existence. CPAC's research and public policy work provides information and counsel to give people a better understanding of what arts and culture does for our community. CPAC works to bolster the sector's benefit to the community while connecting to civic goals. CPAC supports the arts and culture sector with a range of programs and services aimed at helping address issues like marketing, planning and business development. The Artists in Residence project is an example of CPAC's efforts to strengthen arts and culture's leadership in neighborhood revitalization.



**For the past 20 years, Northeast Shores** has been on the ground in North Shore Collinwood carrying out just that kind of sustained revitalization. The organization works to make the neighborhood an even better place in which to live, work and visit, striving always to preserve the community's authentic, mixed-income and diverse heritage. Through residential and commercial development, homeowner services, rental property management, neighborhood planning and community organization, Northeast Shores is incrementally building a community where every individual can shape the neighborhood's future and where individual actions make a big difference. Since 2005, this work has increasingly involved the deep involvement of artists.



**In 2011, Leveraging Investments in Creativity, The Kresge Foundation and The Ford Foundation provided generous support to CPAC to launch Artists in Residence** – a three-year experiment in how to best improve artists' access to affordable space and their engagement in neighborhood revitalization. CPAC had developed a project that would honor best practices gleaned from Rust Belt to Artist Belt yet it needed a partner.

## Artists in Residence

Artists helping the neighborhood ... The neighborhood helping artists.

CPAC launched a wide-open search for an ally. Any community development group in Cleveland could submit a proposal to be the host neighborhood for Artists in Residence. Applicants were asked to make a case for why this kind of creative placemaking work was a good fit for their neighborhood. CPAC wanted to know how the arts and culture played a role in their existing revitalization strategies. Fourteen community development organizations applied, submitting an amazing array of ideas about how Artists in Residence could advance their respective communities. A panel of arts and community development professionals had a tough decision – which one of the fourteen great potential collaborators would be CPAC's partner.



Northeast Shores was ultimately recommended. It was an organization that had a history of helping artists purchase spaces, was perceived to be at a "tipping point" and had an appetite for ramping up artist residents' engagement with their neighbors.

In the time since that decision, both organizations have had an incredible and productive journey. We've had many successes and made some missteps along the way. We've learned and grown together as partners. It's been an adventure, and one we're grateful to have had.

This is the story of our work.





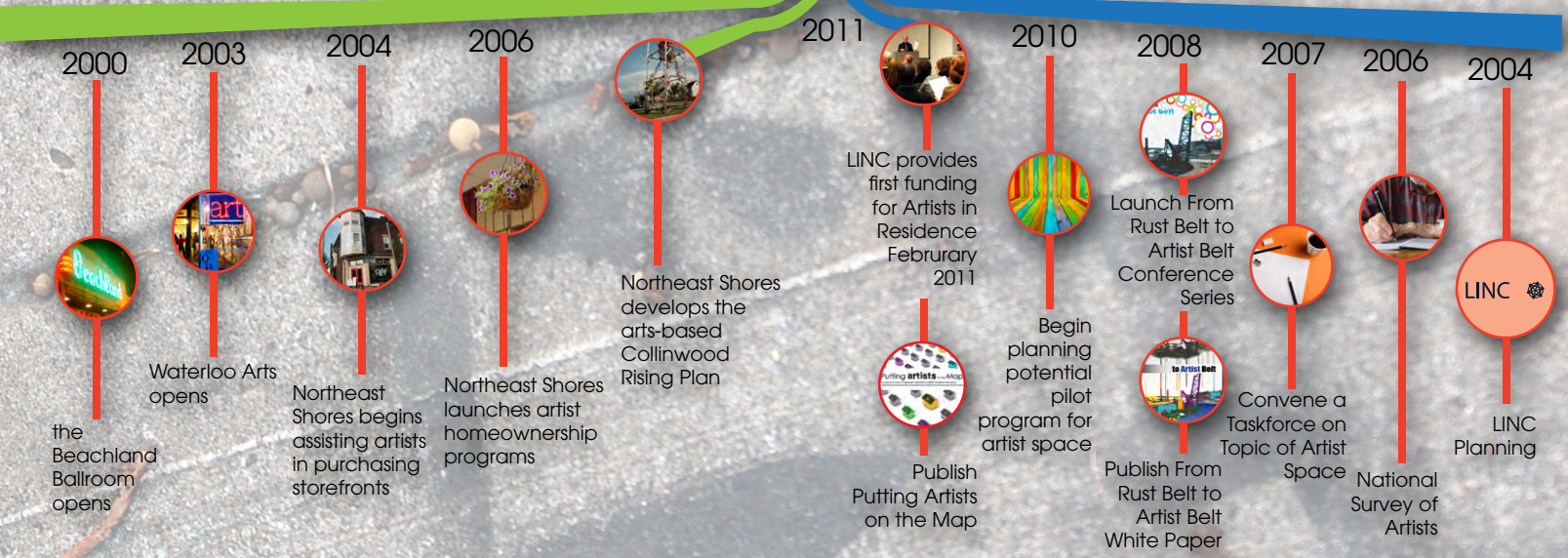
With ArtPlace Support, Northeast Shores launches Collinwood Rising - July 2012

Artists in Residence launches August 2011

Northeast Shores Selected to host Artists in Residence Summer 2011

Northeast Shores applies to host Artists in Residence

Open application process for interested community development groups in spring/summer 2011





# about the work

Our work focuses on two relatively simple concepts – increase artists’ ability to purchase affordable space in Collinwood and their ability to engage directly in the neighborhood’s revitalization. Building the support to make that happen, however, is a bit more complicated.

We started with some special programs and services only available to artists. These include Artists in Residence Grants, which provided financial support for neighborhood artists to carry out community art projects that address priorities like youth engagement and public safety. Artists in Residence Loans, low interest in nature, to help artists tackle the build-out of art space in Collinwood. Artists in Residence has also provided small financial awards through the Cleveland Arsenal program, to incentivize everyday people to market Collinwood and Cleveland. In 2012, Northeast Shores received additional support from ArtPlace to launch Collinwood Rising. The Collinwood Rising Vibrancy Program has provided artists with additional financial support for community art projects that help address vacant and underutilized space.

These program-specific investments were a great start, but as it turns out, Northeast Shores had a number of other programs and services that it offered to the general population that were incredibly useful for artists. This includes affordable real estate options – \$6,500 Houses, where artists do the rehab work themselves, or Fully Rehabbed Houses, where Northeast Shores invests an average of \$125,000 in rehab work and then sells the houses for as little as \$70,000. We have helped artists find business space, from storefronts to new construction and live/work space to other commercial spaces. Sometimes an artist can’t purchase a space right away, or doesn’t want to buy, so we also offer rental space location assistance, subsidized short-term rental space, lease-to own options, and in a small number of cases, even subsidized long-term rental space. And when an artist is ready to move on, we also offer property sales assistance.

Once artists acquire their dream space, they are not abandoned. We have helped them with additional resources like side yard expansion, storefront renovation and even free rain barrels. Where necessary, we have helped artists with foreclosure prevention services.

In addition to artist grants, we also have worked to provide artists with several other means of financial support. Whenever possible, neighborhood artists were hired for services like design and printing, providing them with vendor payments. We have offered artists fiscal sponsorship of their charitable projects, so they would not have to go through the process of becoming a formal nonprofit. We have provided artists with fundraising assistance for their community art projects. And when funds allowed, we have periodically provided artists with other art commissions for site-specific projects.

Opposite these services, we’ve done a lot to address artist needs beyond their space and financial circumstances. We have provided artists with business development assistance to help them create viable business plans. We could be a voice of support for artists to address creditor or landlord advocacy and government advocacy. And we could link artists to services provided by our other community partners, such as employment referrals and social service referrals.

We believe this comprehensive set of 28 artist services is just the type of holistic infrastructure needed to help artists and neighborhoods to thrive.





East 163rd Street in North Shore Collinwood Neighborhood, Cleveland

# about the neighborhood

Of course we're partial, but Collinwood really is extraordinary.

The neighborhood got its start back in 1812 as one of the country's most prominent vineyard communities. By the late 19th century, grapes had been displaced by industry, with the arrival of the Collinwood Rail Yards, what would become the biggest rail complex between New York and Chicago.

As the yards grew, so did Collinwood. An explosion of industrial employment led to an equally large number of immigrant workers who laid down roots in Collinwood and established the neighborhood's long traditions of cultural diversity and a rich music heritage. Home to polka accordionist Frankie Yankovich and many of his bandmates, Collinwood is recognized by many as the birthplace of American polka. By 1930, the population had grown to more than 28,000, and Waterloo Road had become the bustling main street for thousands of rail workers and their families.

But as American industry began to decline, so too did the neighborhood. This was further exacerbated by the construction of the I-90 Interstate, which displaced families whose homes lay in the path of the highway, and permanently severed the neighborhood into South Collinwood and North Shore Collinwood.<sup>1</sup>

Population declined for decades and the Waterloo Road commercial district began to fade. It was increasingly recognized as the stomping grounds of mobster Danny Greene. Artists began to trickle into the neighborhood in the mid-1980s, drawn by its affordability, architecture and lakefront beauty. In the early 2000s, as Cindy Barber opened the Beachland Ballroom and Sarah Gyorki opened Waterloo Arts, the commercial corridor had become synonymous with prostitution and drug trade and lay 40% vacant. Only the Slovenian Workmen's Home remained to preserve the cultural legacy of Collinwood.

Collectively, these artists dreamed of a vibrant arts district and a vibrant neighborhood. Northeast Shores and CPAC's work builds on a foundation of grassroots energy that has already helped transform the community. Collinwood has lower crime rates, higher median income and

<sup>1</sup> Note: Our work takes place in North Shore Collinwood. For the sake of simplicity, we refer to the neighborhood as Collinwood for the remainder of this handbook.

lower poverty rates than the city as a whole. The Waterloo Arts District is now almost fully occupied and, according to data from ArtPlace, is home to 43 independent “indicator businesses,” defined as those businesses most likely to be “destinations of choice for cultural, recreational, consumption or social activity.” It’s a place that stakeholders prize as affordable and diverse with great access to parks and recreation, a place they’re apt to label “creative,” “artistic” and “unique.”

That’s not to imply the neighborhood is without problems. A record loss of 15.5% of its population in the 2000s, resulted in Collinwood outpacing Cleveland’s population decline for the first time since the 1950s. And neighborhood stakeholders continue to raise concerns about making the neighborhood safer, a better place to raise children and a place with more entertainment and shopping options.

Despite these challenges, all the ingredients are there for Collinwood to regain its former glory and likely surpass it. It’s been a pleasure to play a small part in what’s becoming an increasingly happy ending, and we hope that you’ll be hearing the Collinwood story for a long time to come.



## by the **numbers** quick facts about Collinwood

Collinwood is a historically diverse neighborhood but with a changing composition:

<b>1990</b>	<b>19,363 Residents</b> 75.1% Caucasian 24.0% African American
<b>2010</b>	<b>16,761 Residents</b> 67.9% African American 29.3% Caucasian

**Decreasing population:** A 15.5% decrease in population between 2000 and 2010, following a 2.6% increase between 1990 and 2000. Population loss in the 2000s was an all-time high, topping the 13.3% lost in the 1950s opposite I-90 construction.

**Higher median income than citywide (2000):** \$35,149 compared to \$33,651

**Lower than average poverty rates (2000):** 17.8% compared to 26.3%

**Lower than average crime rates (2010):** Crime rates in Collinwood were at their lowest rate in ten years. Crime rates dropped 16.6% between 2007 and 2010 (as they dropped 5.7% citywide). Among Cleveland’s 36 neighborhoods, Collinwood has the 10th lowest crime rate.





Marquee at the LaSalle Theatre on East 185th Street, Cleveland

# planning



(from left) Tonya Broach, Northeast Shores; Esther Robinson, ArtHome; Brian Friedman, Northeast Shores; Cindy Barber, Beachland Ballroom and Tavern



# know what makes your community strong then make it even stronger

U.S. Senator Tip O'Neill once said, "All politics is local." We think the same is true of creative placemaking.

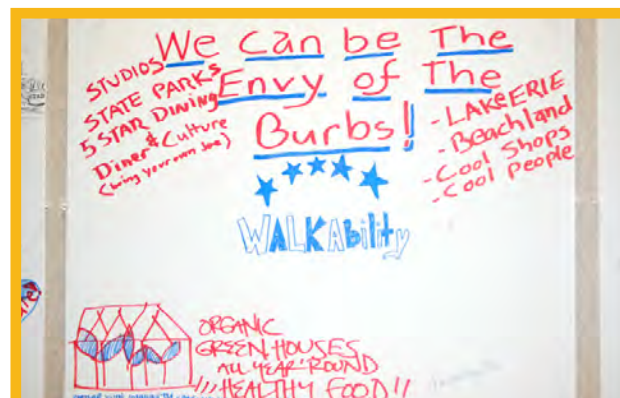
Around the globe, artists, development organizations and other creative thinkers are pushing the envelope on how to revitalize communities. There's a lot to be learned from the amazing work that's already been accomplished. Our programs, for instance, benefited from the insights and advice that we gathered through the Rust Belt to Artist Belt conference series. Site visits to see great placemaking projects in Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Paducah were another source of useful information and new concepts.

But at the end of the day, we have found that *local* context is the key to this work. Collinwood had more than 200 years of history, culture, and voices shaping the community before CPAC and Northeast Shores started our collaboration. We knew that if we wanted to build something that would address local needs, honor local culture and speak to what makes Collinwood such an amazing place, we would need to have a really strong understanding of neighborhood context.

We started that planning effort by sharing what our organizations already knew about Collinwood and Cleveland. CPAC had a wealth of research about local artists and their space needs. Northeast Shores had an abundance of data about residential and commercial trends. Northeast Shores also had a good understanding of community priorities from work with block watches and merchant associations. An existing set of programs and services being offered in the neighborhood and metrics of how many people were taking advantage of them were also available.

That knowledge was critical to us as we shaped Artists in Residence, as was the knowledge that arts activity was already growing in the neighborhood. As one staff member noted, it is really important to have an existing artistic culture before launching programs like ours: "Artists that were attracted from elsewhere really felt like they wanted validation that artists are here. Unless you have a seedling of an arts district, some artist stakeholders on the ground, you're not ready for this type of initiative. You can't just build it and they will come."

Research revealed that clearly a "seedling" was in place. The next step was to engage the broader community for their perspective. We met with neighborhood arts groups. We launched our *Picturing Collinwood* survey, which invited residents, workers and visitors to share their perceptions of Collinwood. We gave 20 neighborhood stakeholders each a disposable camera and asked them to photograph what they liked and didn't like about the neighborhood. Those photographs were exhibited and stimulated more ideas about the neighborhood from attendees.



Collinwood Photo Project exhibition and planning event





## FROM THE FIELD

### center for great neighborhoods

In Covington, Kentucky, the Center for Great Neighborhoods is helping to weave art into neighborhood fabric, and to address community concerns, through its large-scale Westside Placemaking Initiative. Their advice:

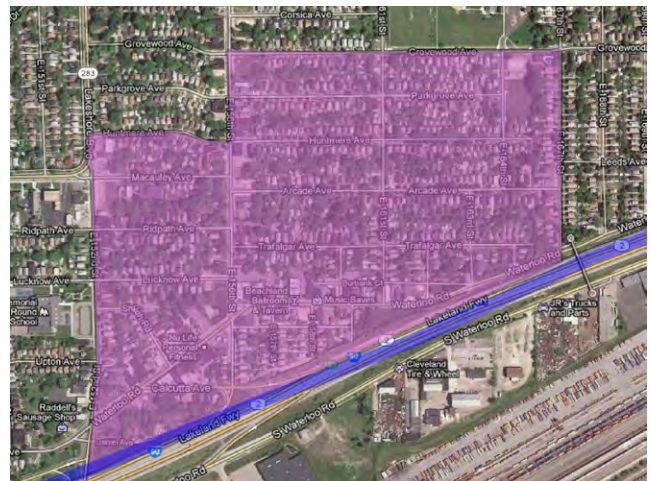
“Before you start any arts-based effort in a community, assess its current creative assets. Be open-minded as to your definition of artist, and don’t assume nothing creative has gone before you. Something as small as a wheat-pasted picture on a building shows a spark of creativity; follow that clue, and then build your efforts from there.”

[www.greatneighborhoods.org](http://www.greatneighborhoods.org)

The feedback we received through this work was immeasurably useful. We learned that neighborhood residents were very supportive of recruiting more artists to the neighborhood (84.7% of residents who responded to our survey supported this effort). We found out that stakeholders highly valued the neighborhood’s proximity to Lake Erie, its diversity and affordability and its long cultural history, from the birth of American polka through to the founding of the Beachland Ballroom. In all of our subsequent marketing and communication, we emphasized this particular set of community assets. And we discovered that stakeholders were particularly concerned about public safety, vacancy, youth engagement and having more celebration of what makes Collinwood unique. When the Artists in Residence grants launched, we asked artists to propose community art projects that would address those four concerns.

We found this research incredibly important, but we also knew that simply engaging in the community where we were launching the project would be critical. One staff member shares that “sometimes looking through the lens of your neighbor or the organization down the street might help you engage better in the community.” Another shares that “if we want to live in great places, we have to be part of what makes those places great. That can mean launching projects like our Artists in Residence grantees, but it also just means showing up to neighborhood meetings and meeting your neighbors and promoting your local independent businesses.”

Regardless of the method used, we recommend spending serious time thinking about the specific context of where you are working and how you can make sure that “all creative placemaking is local.”



Waterloo Arts and Entertainment District project boundaries

# take time with planning and make sure to plan for success

In June 2011, CPAC called Northeast Shores to share exciting news – a panel of arts and community development professionals had just selected the organization to serve as our partner for Artists in Residence.

Three weeks later, we publicly announced the partnership. At that meeting, we shared that we'd be spending the next four months talking with Collinwood community members and setting up systems for managing our artist services.

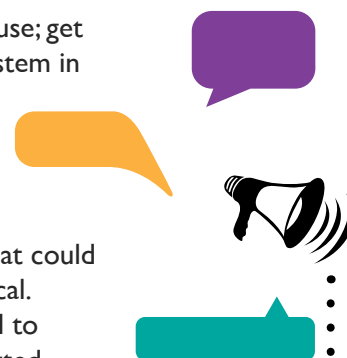
But within three days, we had already heard from artists looking to purchase a house; get funding for an after-school arts program; and get help upgrading the ventilation system in their studio. Before we'd even had a chance to set up an e-mail account for the initiative, we were already feeling the pressure of serving artists.

That tension between planning and service delivery has not always been easy to navigate. We're really passionate about helping artists and helping them quickly. But in the end, taking time to build a program that could serve them well – and that could continue to serve them even after our pilot program ended – was absolutely critical. We needed time to learn about artists' needs and Collinwood's needs. We wanted to get advice from other great creative placemaking programs. And we were committed to creating program guidelines carefully so that forms were easy to fill out and funding decisions were fair and transparent.

So in those early months, we concentrated most of our time on planning. But we also met with artists, explained what types of support were coming, took their contact information and checked in with them periodically. It wasn't always what artists were hoping for, but it was a balance that we felt was best for the overall program.

That commitment to planning ended up being incredibly important. Fast forward to November 2013, and we fielded inquiries from 369 artists. We helped 13 artists achieve homeownership. Northeast Shores has sold a total of 22 houses, during a national housing crisis, in a shrinking city. There's been a flurry of arts activity, as we provided support to artists to launch 59 community art projects. Our annual *Picturing Collinwood* survey showed remarkable improvements in perceptions of the neighborhood, with particularly large spikes in the belief that the neighborhood is changing for the better and that they are proud of it. And all of this happened in just 2 years!

For both organizations, this ended up being one of the program's hallmarks – increasingly good impressions of Collinwood and increasing interest in either moving to the neighborhood or otherwise getting involved there. That interest has been particularly pronounced in the part of Collinwood nearest our arts investments. As one staff member describes it, "we've seen a dramatic change in where buyers are looking. At the beginning of Artists in Residence, buyers were gravitating toward the East 185th side of the neighborhood. Today, it's almost the inverse. It seems like everyone is looking ... closer to the arts district."





Had we not planned carefully at the beginning of the initiative, we very well may have had trouble addressing what turned out to be lots of interest in a short timeframe and in a small geography. As it turns out, one of our largest challenges recently has been getting space for artists – demand simply outpaces supply. A staff member shares the current dilemma of “not having enough properties in the Waterloo area. When people want to be on Waterloo, I’m starting to think, ‘What am I going to do?’”

Another staff member expressed regret that we hadn’t planned for this level of real estate success – that had we reached out early to city officials about strategies for obtaining property, and subsidy to redevelop property for artists, we might be better situated now to move artists into positions of ownership.

Of course, no amount of forethought is going to help you anticipate 100% of circumstances you’ll run into with a complex community effort. But if our experiences are any indicator, creative placemakers would be wise to invest a lot of time in planning – and to think about what they might do if their work ends in success.



East 185th Street

# it takes funding but not always as much as you think

When we talk to groups wanting to start placemaking work, they sometimes have sticker shock about how much has been invested in the effort. Thanks to our incredible funders, we've been able to raise \$2.2 million toward artist services in Collinwood.

That funding has enabled us to build what we believe is a unique system for supporting artists at the neighborhood level. It has fully supported staffing of the programs; a low-interest loan pool; an array of marketing efforts; the build-out of numerous artist spaces; the launch of dozens of community art projects; and planning for how we continue to serve artists after our pilot program.

That incredible funding didn't come in one big chunk from one supporter; it has come from 13 generous sources. It's included contributions from national foundations (52.3% of total funding); national funding consortiums (33.9%); a local arts-based credit union (6.8%); local and state art councils (3.0%); local community foundations (2.3%); and local corporate foundations (1.7%).

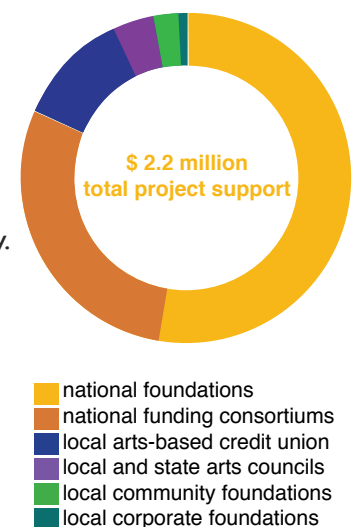
A great deal of support came from national funders (86.2% of total funding). Their generosity provided extraordinary capacity to build something transformational. That said, local funders played an equally critical role. They provide the majority of the long-term general operating support CPAC and Northeast Shores relied on to do research and build program concepts (support that's not included in the \$2.2 million figure). That early validation of our work gave us the confidence to approach national funders with the concepts and to demonstrate to national funders that our work aligned with top local priorities.

The significant number and quality of our accomplishments was clearly due to the generous support of local and national funders. But, when program efforts were examined piece by piece, substantial outcomes had relatively low price tags.

Take the community art projects we've funded. We've invested roughly \$260,000 in support of artists' community work. It's resulted in 59 new community art projects in Collinwood, which have collectively attracted almost 9,000 participants. Some projects had big impact with small investment, including conversion of a boarded storefront window into a community chalkboard (less than \$500) and the collection of residents' messages in a custom-made time capsule (about \$1,700).

While each artist project might seem modest, collectively all the work represented a continuous effort to improve the neighborhood, with a new project starting up, on average, every two weeks for 610 straight days!

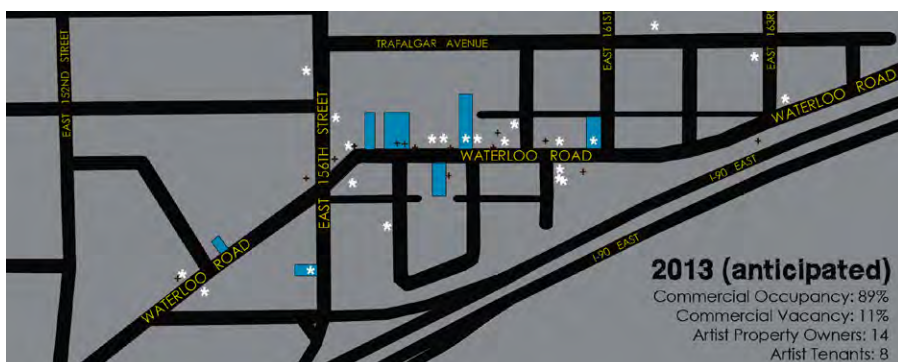
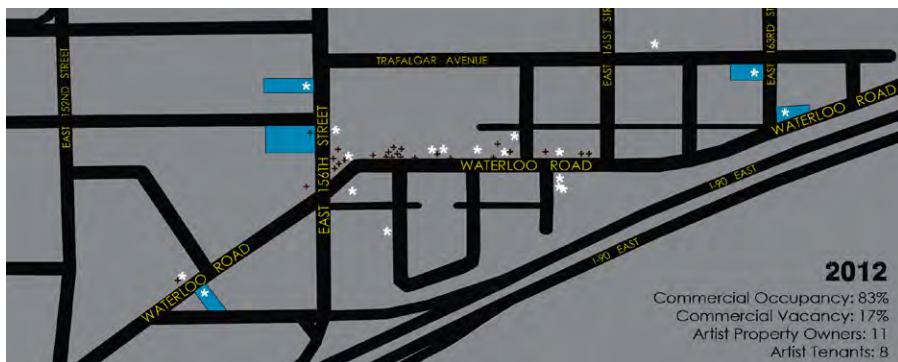
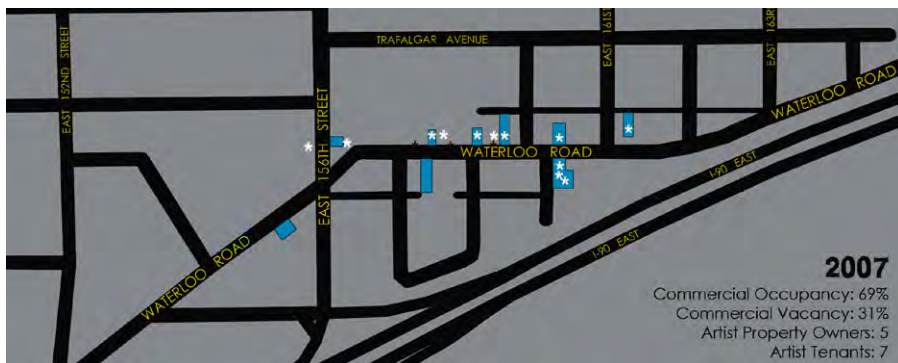
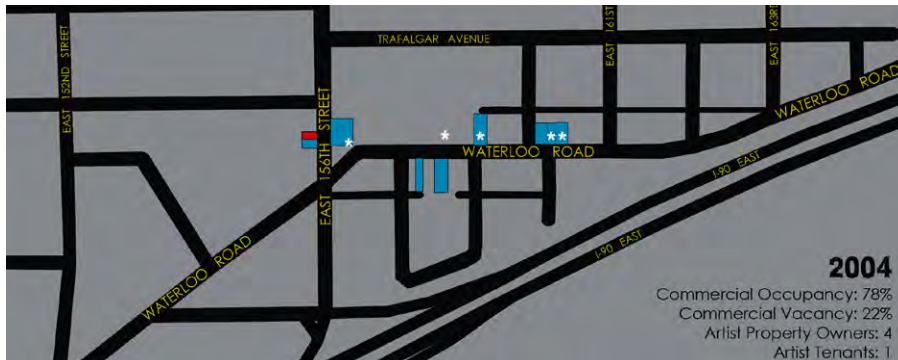
That's not to imply that projects didn't have a great deal of impact individually. Artists poured their hearts and souls into their projects, investing time and energy into making their work meaningful to Collinwood. It very well could be that not all projects had equal impact. One artist sensed that "some ideas are incredible and need a much larger budget, others are fun events or projects that don't need more than \$3,500, and others are hit or miss." Regardless, a number of staff believed artists' projects were collectively one of the most meaningful investments we made, and each represented real community change for \$12,500 or less.





Similar great outcomes emerged from what was perhaps the most highly visible part of the program: our \$6,500 houses. Here, Northeast Shores acquired vacant houses that traditionally wouldn't be thought of as an asset at all and turned them into a strategy to create value for the artist and the community.

That's one of the more incredible things about creative placemaking, whether \$500 or \$5 million is invested, meaningful outcomes can be achieved at any scale in any community. While incredible support can lead to incredible outcomes, our work in Collinwood is evidence much can be achieved to advance a community without breaking the bank.



Growth over time in the Waterloo Arts and Entertainment District







# spotlight on \$6,500 houses

When it comes to nuts-and-bolts questions, perhaps the most frequent one we receive is “How can you possibly sell an artist a house for \$6,500?!”

The answer starts with the formation of the Cuyahoga Land Bank in 2008. This government body builds relationships with groups like the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Fannie Mae to capture vacant housing, rather than seeing it get unloaded in bulk in places like eBay. The vast majority of these houses are demolished; in a shrinking city with a soft demand for housing, local officials would rather see them gone than dragging down values of surrounding buildings.

In places like Collinwood though, the Land Bank’s inventory can help us get property into the hands of eager owner occupants with limited financial means. When the Land Bank acquires a property in Collinwood, Northeast Shores walks through it to determine its condition. The organization may then take ownership at a cost that is limited to reimbursement of the Land Bank’s expenses. If the house is in poor condition and will require a lot of work, the organization typically performs a full rehab themselves and then uses local and federal subsidies to sell the home for less than the cost of redevelopment.

If the house is in fair to good condition though, Northeast Shores will sell the home directly to a buyer to perform the rehab work themselves. Each prospective buyer goes through free homeownership training and credit counseling with Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland. The training helps to ensure they know what is required of them and can demonstrate their financial capacity to take on the project. The buyer then has six months to carry out a short list of required rehab improvements – typically an investment of \$15,000 to \$30,000. If they fail to complete this work, or if they try to sell the property within three years, Northeast Shores has the right to reclaim the property, helping to maintain positive outcomes for the neighborhood.

Local government avoids demolition costs that average \$10,000 per property and instead gets owner occupants that continue to pay property taxes. Artists and other buyers gain the ability to obtain ownership of century-old homes in a promising, lakefront neighborhood for less than \$40,000. They also increase their asset base and reduce the likelihood of being pushed out of the neighborhood due to gentrification pressures. Collinwood benefits from having energetic and engaged homeowners taking over problem properties, helping to stabilize the otherwise thriving neighborhood. It’s the ultimate win-win-win.



Home purchased from the Cuyahoga Land Bank before renovation



Same home after construction



Collinwood home before artist rehab



Same home after artist rehab





Laura Zabel, Springboard for the Arts,  
presenting at an Arts and Culture  
Roundtable in Cleveland

## FROM THE FIELD

### springboard for the arts

In St. Paul, Springboard for the Arts is building a range of different support programs for artists and finding new ways to build community through artists' work. A key example is Irrigate, their huge, artist-led placemaking initiative alongside the construction of a light rail corridor. Their advice:

**Give people a common cause.** Help people see how their small action can combine with their neighbors and add up to something bigger. We have found the invitation and the charge to use creative skills to help your own neighborhood is very powerful.

**Make t-shirts.** Don't underestimate the power of a uniform to make the common cause visible and to give people a sense of ownership and investment in the work.

**Start (and stay) small.** Seeding the community with hundreds of small projects provides hundreds more opportunities to engage community, attract media attention, and develop relationships than one single large project.

[www.springboardforthearts.org](http://www.springboardforthearts.org)

# artists are valuable and should be valued but they aren't a silver bullet

It's hard for us to imagine looking at what's happened in Collinwood and *not* think that artists have been a tremendous benefit to the neighborhood.

It seems that a lot of people agree with us. In our 2013 *Picturing Collinwood* survey, 81.3% of respondents believed artists were making Collinwood a better neighborhood (compared to only 0.6% who thought artists were making it worse). Community art projects were cited as a particularly high-visibility example of what artists were doing for the neighborhood. As one respondent summed it up, artists' community work has "helped revitalize the neighborhood by focusing on successes instead of failures."

With solid backing from neighborhood stakeholders stating artists were valuable, we worked to recognize their valued contributions. Resources were directed toward rewarding artists with 28 different programs and services that could help them address a range of needs. Valuing artists meant paying them for their work. It meant making sure they had opportunities to purchase property. And it meant simply sitting down to help them write a business plan, obtain foreclosure prevention or secure a job.

However, valuing artists was about more than just service delivery. It was about validating their work by engaging them as partners. One staff member recommends that "rather than thinking about artists as an add-on, I'd encourage community development organizations to sit down with their strategic plans and a full list of all of their community priorities and think creatively about roles artists might play."





## by the **numbers** how valuable are artists?

CPAC and Northeast Shores believed in the transformative power of artists even before we launched Artists in Residence. But does the broader community believe artists are important? Here's what the 199 respondents to our 2013 *Picturing Collinwood* survey had to say.

*In general, would you say artists are making Collinwood a better neighborhood, a worse neighborhood, or do they not have much effect on the neighborhood?*

Make it better	81.8%
Make it worse	0.6%
Don't have much effect	17.7%

*In general, do you think there are already too many artists in Collinwood, about the right amount or that we should recruit more artists here?*

Too many artists already	2.9%
About the right amount of artists	13.3%
Recruit more artists	83.8%

*Having artists in a neighborhood helps the local economy.*

Agree / Strongly Agree	75.9%
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	4.9%

*Artists help bring different groups of people in a neighborhood together.*

Agree / Strongly Agree	90.7%
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	1.6%

*Artists improve the educational success of a neighborhood's children.*

Agree / Strongly Agree	68.7%
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	3.2%

*Artists make it easier for people to see life in a different light.*

Agree / Strongly Agree	81.8%
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	3.4%



Meanwhile, an artist shares that having artists “involved directly in [your] organization, whether it’s as an advisor or staff, does a lot to legitimize the organization and to build trust [with artists].” Northeast Shores definitely believed in that concept, employing four artists over the past two years.

Programs for artists were developed. Artists were engaged in neighborhood projects, and the Collinwood community became excited about that effort. The work hardly ended there. While artists have been a big part of the strategy, it’s fair to say non-artists in the community had a range of priorities to address. When people were surveyed about *assets* in the neighborhood, the arts (along with Collinwood’s lakefront) always top the list. But when we asked about their *priorities* for the neighborhood, supporting artists was consistently overshadowed by concerns regarding safety, youth engagement and vacancy.

Similar attitudes were evident among artists who’ve participated in Artists in Residence and Collinwood Rising.

Consider an artist concern about neighborhood businesses

*“I think the Waterloo Neighborhood has a lot of potential, but the merchants and residents must not be forgotten during [two years of streetscape construction] ... It has been very hard on some of them.”*

Or about the well-being of low-income residents

*“The poverty of the area residents ... It’s pretty grim, and I hope we are not just trying to run them out and gentrify the street.”*

Or recommending that communities planning creative placemaking programs should include non-arts assets

*“They need to assess how easy it is to live in areas without grocery shopping or greenspaces. It’s often difficult to live in city neighborhoods because of these issues.”*

When artists were asked about the importance of our artist programs to make Collinwood a better neighborhood, 84.6% said Artists in Residence was very important, and 84.2% said the same of Collinwood Rising. But the majority of artists placed high importance on all of Northeast Shores’ major efforts, including a \$5.5 million streetscape improvement (79.5%, very important); master planning for another commercial corridor and for the neighborhood’s lakefront parks (74.4% each); and an effort to open several new restaurants in the art district (69.2%).

So artists and non-artists see the arts as a critical strategy, but not the only one. This seems to suggest that creative placemaking will be most successful within a broader set of strategies for advancing a place.

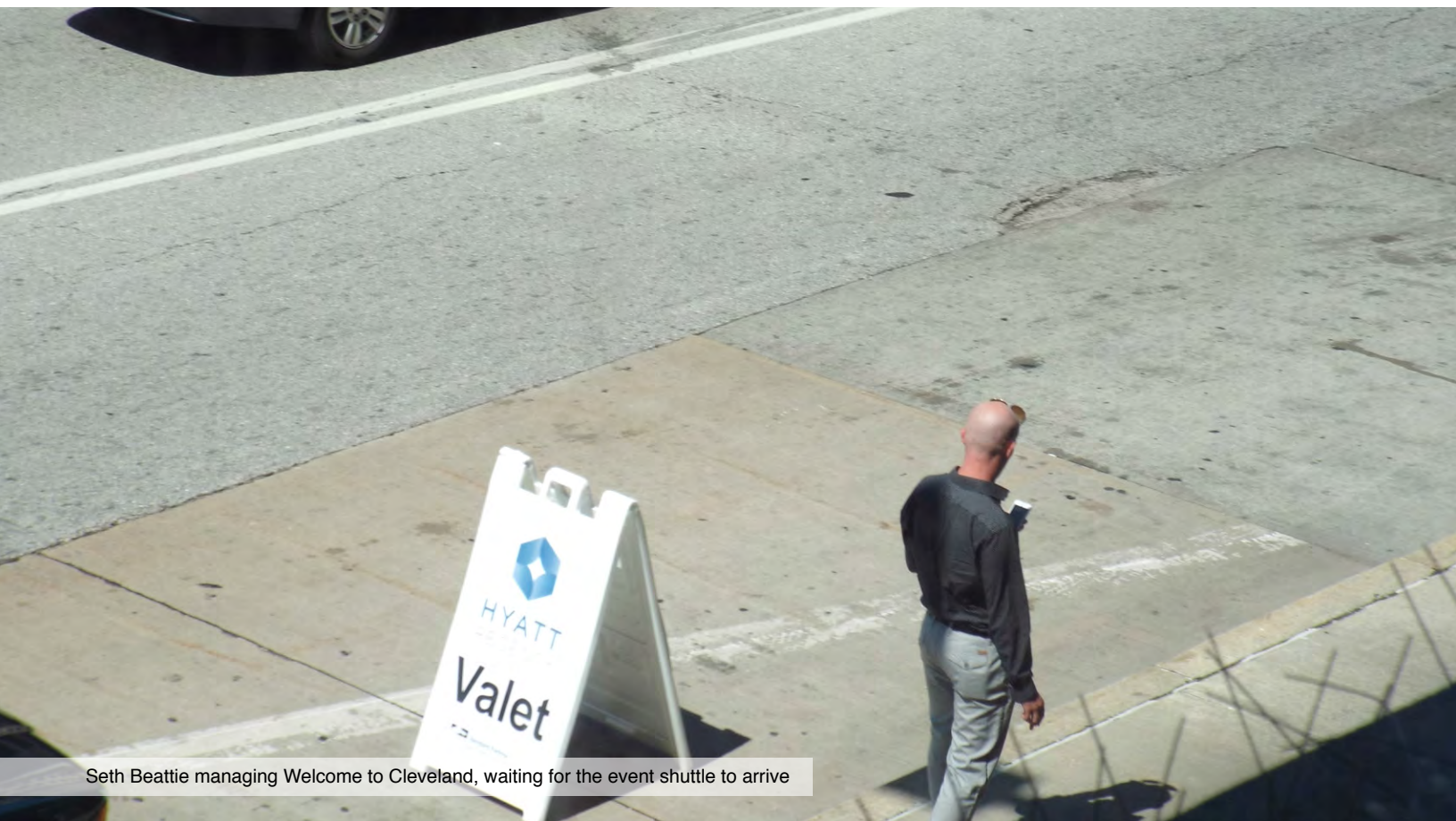
Artists are wise to consider how that holistic approach might impact their proposed work. As one staff member points out, multiple priorities mean that a community development group’s approach to artist projects “may not be simply ‘Okay, go out and do that’. It might include public meetings, design charrettes, elected and appointed officials ... The touch points and the barriers that [community development corporations] have to navigate are many.”

Another staff member, though, encourages artists to maintain their independence opposite crowded community agendas: “Don’t be so eager to please. Stay creative and awesome. The reason people should want to do this is the unique outcomes that can occur.”



Camille Maxwell offering a tour of a home rehabbed by Northeast Shores

# management



Seth Beattie managing Welcome to Cleveland, waiting for the event shuttle to arrive





## FROM THE FIELD

### ArtHome

ArtHome works with communities across the country to develop asset-building systems for artists, focusing on how this support can advance both cultural vitality and economic stability at the neighborhood level. Their advice:

“Artists working with community organizations can create real value. But to really succeed, such partnerships must embrace everyone’s notions of value. Good art matters; being a good neighbor/partner matters equally. Understanding each other’s goals, aligning values and giving more than you get are all essential strategies for success.”

[www.arthome.org](http://www.arthome.org)



# this is going to take time and energy

When we asked CPAC and Northeast Shores staff what they thought were the biggest hurdles for our placemaking work, the nearly unanimous answer was the timeframe of the effort.

*“I think that time has been a challenge, which is not unusual in terms of a project of this scale and scope ... You start out working on a timeline, and then that timeline doesn’t always work out.”*

*“All of that relationship-building and nuanced technical assistance is really at the heart of making this type of grassroots programming work, but it takes a ton of time.”*

*“With just 2.5 years and limited staffing, it was a really difficult process to accomplish everything that we wanted to, and one that sometimes created tensions between CPAC and Northeast Shores that we probably wouldn’t have had with a more relaxed schedule. We were just simply doing too much too fast.”*

Creative placemaking programming, like many community efforts, can look straight-forward on paper. CPAC and Northeast Shores wanted to increase artists' access to affordable space as well as integrate them in neighborhood revitalization. Building a loan program and grant program for artists, helping them obtain space, and then marketing those offerings extensively would be the strategies for success. Simple.

Time was needed to plan the initiative and get the community engaged in decision-making; to design and develop programs; to market the effort; to field artists' inquiries and build relationships with them; time to serve their needs; and time to evaluate our pilot work and plan next steps. Our work was further complicated by the fact that the 369 artists we were working with came from different backgrounds. They had different levels of readiness to participate (both financially and geographically) and different goals and interests. This required a tailored approach to service delivery, one-on-one counseling and guiding them toward 1 or more of 28 programs and services.

The time crunch also posed some hurdles for artists launching community projects, as one staff member shares: "Artists have huge aspirations in terms of what they're going to be able to achieve in a certain timeframe versus what they can actually implement as an individual. In some cases, the challenges are absolutely worth it, but it's still been a challenge."

Despite these concerns, there were arguably benefits to a tighter timeframe as well. Staff noted that it contributed to a sense of momentum in the neighborhood, with a lot of activity happening all at once. That sense of constant activity and constant improvement has helped produce a great deal of media coverage, both locally and nationally. It demonstrated successes early in the effort, particularly important for communications with funders, many of whom had provided us with one-year grants.

The work became the balance between eagerness and ambitions to quickly create positive outcomes, opposite what could realistically be achieved. The balance was particularly important, given the team effort the initiative required, with participation from everyone at Northeast Shores and everyone at CPAC. As one staff member advises, "It's a lot of work ... Not only for the person running it but for the people supporting it. If you are supporting it, there's always more to be done, and you can always take it further. At the same time, know your limits."

Another stresses that the work is not only time-consuming – but also incredibly emotional: "People are very passionate about what [the programming] is doing ... Maybe about different things, but everyone's passionate. Just make sure that you have awareness of that level of emotion going in."

Given everything we were trying to accomplish with our programming, sometimes we just had to make time to laugh. Opposite, the sweat and tears that went into making it all happen, sometimes we had to stop, take in the successes and have fun.

And then ... Back to work!





# prioritize your goals

Artists in Residence and Collinwood Rising had simple enough aims – offering artists affordable space and facilitating artists’ greater involvement at a neighborhood level. Within this simple vision, however, we were trying to accomplish many things, sometimes unspoken, simultaneously.

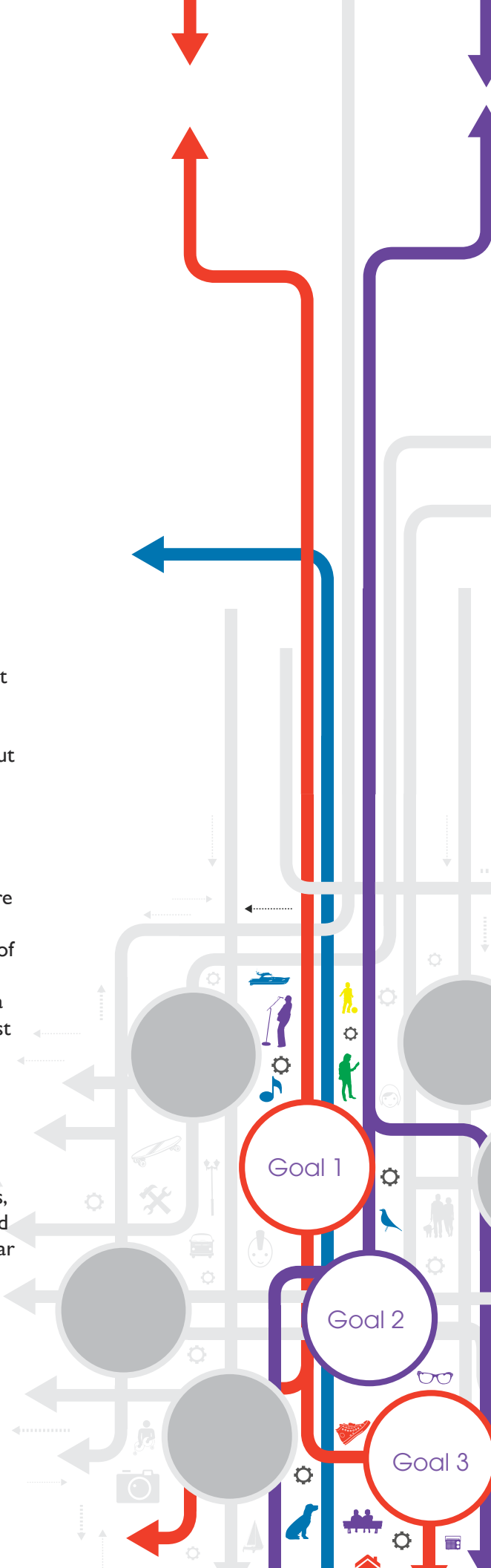
We wanted to improve artists' ability to purchase homes and storefronts, reduce neighborhood vacancy, get the community more familiar with arts programming, help raise the visibility of artists as community leaders, leverage artists' creativity to develop new solutions to neighborhood priorities and advance positive perceptions of Collinwood.

In short, we wanted to accomplish a great deal of objectives. But as one staff member shares, “we delineated so many different goals for [these] programs, but we didn’t prioritize them.” Wanting to accomplish everything possible is difficult enough, but it gets even more complicated when you have multiple partners working together.

In our own work, it was easy for two eager supporters of placemaking work to overlook some significant differences in organizational perspective. CPAC has artists as one of a few core constituent groups and neighborhood revitalization as one of many areas of focus, while Northeast Shores has artists as one of many constituent groups and neighborhood revitalization as its sole area of focus. CPAC has an interest in creating benefit for a particular group countywide (457 square miles), while Northeast Shores has an interest in creating benefit for many different groups within just two square miles.

These different perspectives affected the partners' concepts of timeframe. CPAC's primary concern was in implementing the pilot work over 2.5 years to leverage successes to further support artists throughout greater Cleveland. Northeast Shores, meanwhile, was focused solely on the Collinwood neighborhood and was always thinking about how to continue artist services far beyond the initial 2.5 years. Both perspectives are equally valid, but those different perspectives led to significant differences in vision and the order of priorities.

Differences in priorities are likely to appear in many sustained nonprofit partnerships; but, the distinctiveness of each partner's goals doesn't diminish your ability to produce great work





## FROM THE FIELD

### Wormfarm Institute

Across the landscape of Sauk County, Wisconsin, the Wormfarm Institute is bringing together culture and agriculture in a profound way. Through programs like Food Chain and the Farm/Art DTour, the organization is leading the way on how creative placemaking can advance rural communities. Their advice:

“The important part of what has become known as community engaged work, social practice or relational aesthetics is that it looks outward ... For organizers, we may be targeting that engagement toward a civic or community development goal. At minimum, both the artist and the organizers need to understand and respect each other’s goals.”

[www.wormfarminstitute.org](http://www.wormfarminstitute.org)

together, as evident through the partnership of CPAC and Northeast Shores. The key, as one artist describes, is to “understand what the goals of each partner is and what the ‘merge’ is. You have to stick to that intersection of what makes sense and not try to push to make something fit.”

Just as CPAC and Northeast Shores have learned about each other’s visions and priorities, it was equally important to understand and appreciate those of our constituents. In the early months of the initiative, we anticipated that low-interest loans for creative space improvements and grants to launch community art projects would be equally popular. As the months unfolded and we gained a better sense of program demand, however, it became clear grants were of far greater interest to artists. That observation subsequently led to allocating more time and energy toward preparing artists to launch community art projects.

Articulating goals clearly, loudly and often, doesn’t prevent all ambiguity. One of the artists advises community groups to “decide if you want participants to make new art, or provide social services.” Ideally, the “merge” between community development groups and individual artists is evident. Another artist counsels, “I think it’s always important when working with other people to make sure everyone gets what they want and that you understand the priorities of both the community group – things like increased marketing or a specific deliverable – and the artist, who might be more interested in being creative or solving a problem.”

Virtually everyone that CPAC and Northeast Shores worked with had a genuine interest in moving Collinwood forward; however, that didn’t mean all operated from a uniform vision. Finding common ground is the key to cultivating the kinds of community strength that everyone values.



# make time to build meaningful relationships

Creative placemaking can conjure up images of bricks-and-mortar work. You turn a litter-filled lot into a community garden. You convert a vacant warehouse into a vibrant artist colony. You cover a big, blank wall with a new mural.

These interventions can have a huge impact on a community, breathing life into unused space and showcasing that a place has current relevance and a promising future.

But what we have learned in our placemaking efforts – and what we’ve heard from other groups doing similar work across the country – is that what counts the most is the relationship-building that comes along with those great new spaces.

It’s easy to miss just how critical relationship-building is to placemaking. On paper, our work looks like grants and low-interest loans and space ownership. But in the day-to-day reality of seeding these programs, it’s been visiting peers in Paducah, Pittsburgh and St. Louis to learn from their work; building a rapport with 369 artists; giving 21 tours of our neighborhood to funders and other decision-makers; making 12 presentations to neighborhood stakeholder groups; briefing 20 federal, state and local officials about our efforts; and sharing information about our program with groups looking to launch projects similar to our own, in 21 presentations and 8 one-on-one meetings.

It’s been a whirlwind of speaking and listening, inspiring and being inspired. But it’s been a truly *meaningful* whirlwind – both for the artists we serve and for our staffs. As one artist brilliantly sums it up, “This doesn’t sound like a deliverable of the program, but in the end, it’s probably the most important part of this type of program... Talking to people, building relationships, building trust, so people feel empowered to do the work of revitalization themselves.” That’s where the real placemaking magic happens.

We learned relationship-building has some downsides, too. Relationships take time to root, which may mean that the greatest impact of your work might happen years down the road, long after the final reports have been submitted to funders. It’s incredibly time-consuming work, particularly as some of the most meaningful relationships might be new ones that are built from scratch.



Artist Melissa Daubert with sculptures in a Collinwood Pocket Park



CAT Institute alumni, Stan Chisholm (L) and Damon Davis (R) presenting at Mind the Gap: Stepping into Arts-Based Community Action

## FROM THE FIELD

### Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis

Since 1985, St. Louis' Regional Arts Commission has been playing a lead role in nurturing artists and cultural organizations in the city. For the past 16 years, that work has included the Community Arts Training Institute, one of the country's leading programs for advancing art's power as an agent of social change. Their advice:

"Artists can play unique roles in inspiring and facilitating the creative energies and poetic capacities already residing within communities—forging collaborations across professional and personal divides to yield powerful results. Artists working within a community context have the opportunity to create exciting, unanticipated relationships."

[www.racstl.org](http://www.racstl.org)

Take the increasing conversations Northeast Shores has been having with national peers in arts-related development. Community development networks tend to be very localized, but one Northeast Shores staff member points out that, in many ways, Northeast Shores' revitalization strategy is more similar to some of these national peers than to other community development groups in Cleveland. These new conversations have greatly informed Northeast Shores' efforts, and Northeast Shores has been able to share details about its unique approach to artist space ownership. Nonetheless, these new relationships have taken time and effort to build.

Time-intensity might explain why the relationship-building process is ongoing. While our organizations have strived to be as inclusive as possible, an artist shares the perspective that our artist support programs "may not have done anything to bridge a segment of the population that isn't already tuned into the cultural happenings of Cleveland ... I think there are people in the neighborhood that don't understand what's happening and feel like they're not a part of it."

There were always new relationships for CPAC and Northeast Shores to cultivate. However, we have found that cultivating relationships *among* program participants was equally important.

One artist wishes we'd offer "more meetings with all the other people who are applying [for artist grants] — So they can develop cross-overs and partnerships of support." Another artist shares why that artist-to-artist relationship-building is critical for building strong community art projects: "Solo adventures don't always work well, partly because no one is good at everything, and partly because you get better ideas working together."

Meeting by meeting, presentation by presentation, conversations happen. Some will bear immediate fruit, others will take time to blossom, and still others may not ever have a tangible, observable benefit to the community; however it's all part of Collinwood's amazing journey.





Waterloo Arts Fest activity

# implementation

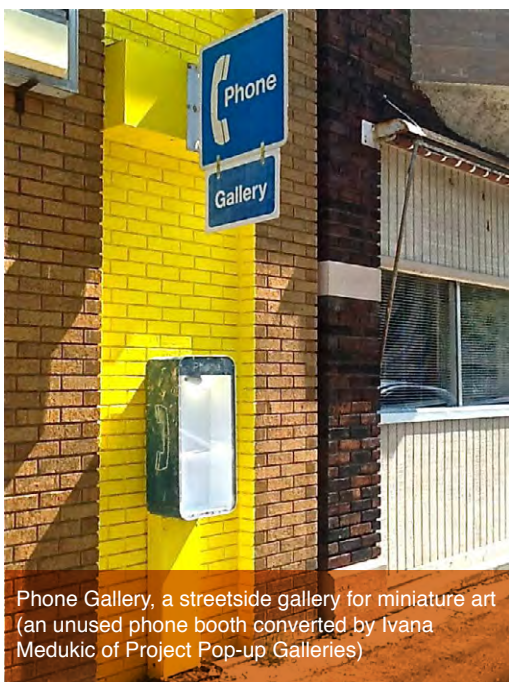


Northeast Shores Development Corp Rehab in progress



# start small

## but build for the big



Phone Gallery, a streetside gallery for miniature art (an unused phone booth converted by Ivana Medukic of Project Pop-up Galleries)

There's no doubt that CPAC and Northeast Shores were eager and ambitious with Artists in Residence and Collinwood Rising. Both organizations had a sense of responsibility, recognizing this was potentially a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase what happens when you position artists to be neighborhood change agents.

We tried to accomplish as much as we could, using every second and every dollar of support effectively and efficiently. We also learned to focus eagerness and scale ambitions.

Offering artists 28 distinct forms of support didn't prevent adjustment of programming. Although we considered being a mortgage provider, we realized the legal and financial complexities were outside our expertise. We also dropped plans for a matched-savings program, which would incentivize artists to save money for purchasing space by matching their savings contributions, after the largest local provider of these Individual Development Accounts suspended

their program. Instead of these programs, we steered support toward other strategies for increasing artist space ownership, like homeownership training and collateralizing low-interest loans for artistic equipment and space improvements.

We recalibrated the geography of the Artists in Residence project. From CPAC's earliest planning meetings with the advisory taskforce and staff it was clear that a citywide project would have diluted the purpose. Once Collinwood was determined to be the project's focus, the geography underwent further refinement. Northeast Shores serves a community that covers two square miles and is home to nearly 17,000 residents. This still seemed like too large an area to demonstrate the impact of our pilot programming; instead, we chose to focus our energy on the quarter-square mile surrounding the Waterloo Arts District, a target area with about 1,500 residents. While artists who lived or worked anywhere in Northeast Shores' service area could take advantage of the programs and services, community art projects had to be based within the target area. The bulk of artist space offerings were located within the district.

Decisions to "start small" aren't always easy. The size of the geography left the potential for some parts of the Collinwood neighborhood to feel omitted, and there's some reason to believe that happened. Our annual surveying indicated perceptions of the neighborhood are generally improving faster among residents living closer to the target area compared to those residents that are more distant from the area. A number of artists shared their desire to see a more widespread approach

*"I would like to see more small projects being developed in spots around the neighborhood besides the main drag on Waterloo."*



*“Waterloo is a piece of the puzzle, but so is East 185th/LaSalle, Euclid Beach/ Neff, and 5 Points. I definitely think you have succeeded through the Waterloo Arts Festival, the record stores, and the constant attraction of the Beachland to make the Waterloo neighborhood an indie rock destination. But the other, larger districts in Collinwood need this success to spread.”*

*“I guess I’d say ... that I miss East 185th being a destination. That was one of the finer shopping district streets in our city.”*

Northeast Shores and CPAC were sympathetic to those perspectives. However, we were equally sensitive that people could clearly observe a change in the area where the investment would be made. The desire was to start small, then leverage successes to acquire new funding and incrementally expand the geographic footprint. The programs were designed to grow, concentrating on developing infrastructure first, which included marketing databases, surveying tools, artist homeownership guides and website infrastructure that would endure beyond the 2.5 years of pilot work.

One staff member observed the development of the support infrastructure, while more or less invisible outside of CPAC and Northeast Shores, was one of the biggest impacts of the partnership: “None of these tools are all that revolutionary, but together, they’re basically a megaphone for work that Northeast Shores has been doing quietly for years ... and plans to do on an even grander scale in the future.”

It seems that was and is beginning to happen. As both housing and storefronts become increasingly scarce in the quarter-square mile of focus, Northeast Shores is looking to grow that target area to a half-mile, moving revitalization efforts northward toward the neighborhood’s lakefront parks. Meanwhile, Northeast Shores has been incrementally building up resources to activate the East 185th corridor referenced above. For example, it has been working to convert the LaSalle Theater into an arts and media center.

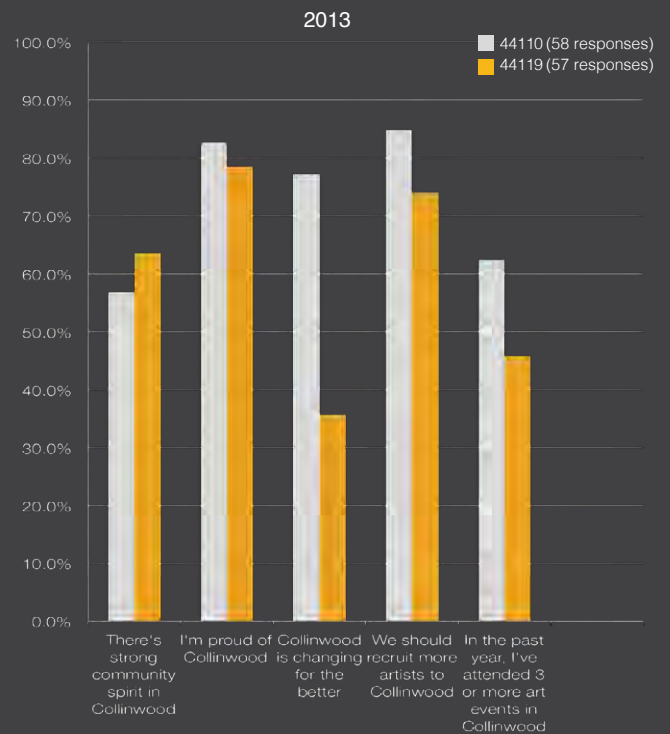
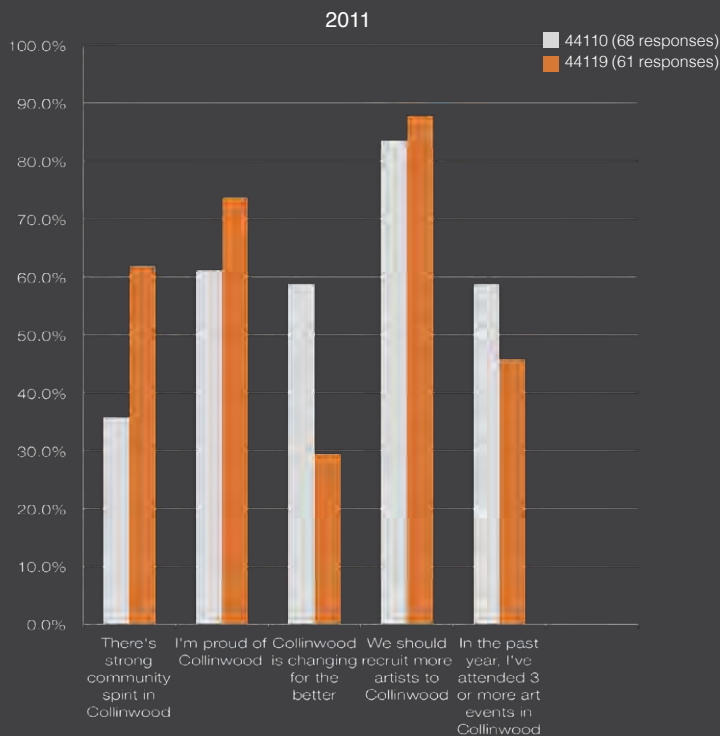
Slowly but surely, the groundwork for resident-driven change is permeating the Collinwood neighborhood, now and for the foreseeable future.



## by the numbers

### a tale of two neighborhoods

Collinwood is a big neighborhood, covering two miles and two zip codes. The artist support programs focus on strengthening one-quarter square mile designated as the Waterloo Arts District, located within the 44110 zip code. Has that situation produced different opinions among residents that live closer to the investment and those that live farther away? The *Picturing Collinwood* survey suggests that might be the case.





# be flexible and adaptable

## and acknowledge when things aren't working

As previously stated, a significant amount of time and concentration were invested into planning the programs. Regardless of the amount of effort, surprises will surface.

Take the approach to financing artist space. In 2004, Leveraging Investments in Creativity supported CPAC's planning process around improving the well-being of greater Cleveland artists. CPAC's *Advancing Support Systems for Artists in the Cleveland Metropolitan Area* study has since served as a framework for a number of CPAC artist support programs. A key issue in that study was artists' barriers to low-interest financing to support work or to obtain space. Because many worked at multiple jobs, were self-employed or had income that varied throughout the year, they were considered risky by many lenders.

CPAC designed a solution in partnership with the Cuyahoga County Treasurer's Office in 2004. Known as ArtistAdvance, the program would have leveraged Ohio enabling legislation that was originally designed for farmers. Under that legislation, the state would allow County governments to accept lower interest rates on their deposits in return for banks using the differential to reduce the interest rate farmers would pay to those banks for working capital loans.

It was a unique model that could be designed to apply to artists; however due to changes in Federal Bankruptcy laws, and the subsequent movement toward more conservative lending, the banks lost interest in solidifying the initiative.

Fast forward to the launch of Artists in Residence in 2011. We had a large initiative centered on affordable artist space. There was a willing and well-positioned lending partner in NoteWorthy Federal Credit Union, a local arts-based financial institution in operation since 1960. Noteworthy had a relatively high lending capacity and an interest in increasing loan service to local artists.

The timing and partner were ideal for the launch of the Artists in Residence loans. The Artists in Residence focus on a single neighborhood, rather than the entire county, didn't require a high volume of resources. A \$37,500 deposit by CPAC provided 25% collateral on \$150,000 worth of NoteWorthy loans, enough money to finance roughly 30 small artist loans within one-quarter square mile.

With the collateral element in place, and with the commitment that all loan applicants would participate in Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland's homeownership training, NoteWorthy was willing to reduce interest rates for participants by 3.15% to 4.225%. The loans wouldn't be mortgages; artists would provide additional collateral through equipment or other assets. By avoiding



liens on property, onerous reporting requirements were unnecessary. In addition, artists would avoid shouldering second or third mortgages on their spaces.

A program component was forming to address the financial barriers of local artists and demonstrate their creditworthiness to lenders. CPAC and Northeast Shores were enthusiastic. NoteWorthy and Neighborhood Housing Services were excited. The funders and peer organizations were happy; this could be a low-cost model for addressing a serious financial impediment to artists nationwide.

The program launched and virtually no one took advantage of it. During the life of the program, 11 artists made inquiries and one loan was processed; meanwhile, NoteWorthy was experiencing a dramatic uptick in other loan applications. When the collateralized low interest rate component is compared to the \$125,000 invested in the Artists in Residence *grant* program (which generated 69 artist inquiries, funding 18 artists and their 21 community projects) the favorite program component is clear.

### So what happened? Here are some staff theories:

Availability of grant funds made the idea of loan dollars less appealing. Loans were limited to artists who had space in Collinwood. Artists who were eligible and interested didn't always meet the minimum financial requirements NoteWorthy set for approving loans.

A few artists noted that while the program offered competitive interest rates, given the small size of the loans and the short repayment periods (one to four years), the savings on interest payments was relatively small over, for instance, credit card financing. This wasn't enough savings to justify their participation in the homeownership training requirement. The short timeframe of pilot programming also provided little time for marketing the loan program. A number of potential applicants had only recently purchased properties and didn't want to acquire an Artists in Residence loan until they finished other home rehab work.



Cover of informational brochure about the loan program



Regardless of low interest, the component provided value. It deepened our engagement with Neighborhood Housing Services and NoteWorthy. Subsequently, Neighborhood Housing Services has started tracking artists served as part of its intake process. NoteWorthy and Neighborhood Housing Services have entered into a formal referral partnership. Neighborhood Housing Services in its collaboration with ArtHome is distributing a handbook to potential new homeowners, with a focus on financial readiness issues that artists in particular need to address. Perhaps the most important part of the whole process was being attuned to interest levels for the offerings. Acknowledging the loan component wasn't meeting expectations resulted in making an informed decision about how to address that issue.

Because the financial commitment behind the program was relatively small, we ended up letting the loan program live throughout our pilot work, as a way to draw attention to the breadth of artist support in Collinwood, as well as to NoteWorthy as a local resource.

The decision to retain the offering exemplified adaptability due to changing circumstances. As a Collinwood artist points out, "a successful program should always be really flexible. An [inflexible] plan can be death to a good idea ... if you want to take advantage of a different opportunity or to respond to an assumption that you made."

**What's an Artists in Residence Loan?**

Artists in Residence Loans are the latest offering from NoteWorthy Federal Credit Union, a financial institution with a long history of serving the needs of the arts and culture community. Loans support artists looking to create art space in the North Shore Collinwood neighborhood. It's the perfect loan for an arts project that a commercial lender might not consider. CPAC partners with you and provides 25% collateral on every loan to make it easier for you to complete a project without the need for taking on a second mortgage. Artists in Residence loans have flexible repayment schedules and interest rates starting as low as 5.6% APR. Best of all, you're getting service from organizations that understand the financial challenges artists face.

**Who's eligible to apply for a loan?**

The Artists in Residence Loan is available to artists of all backgrounds and all disciplines (craft, dance, design, literature, media, music, theatre and visual art). The program is focused on investments in the North Shore Collinwood neighborhood, so applicants should have access to space in the neighborhood or be in the process of obtaining space there. While these loans are focused in North Shore Collinwood, NoteWorthy, Northeast Shores and the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture can refer you to a range of other resources to support your art space projects, regardless of where in greater Cleveland they are taking place.

**So how do I apply for the loan?**

Simply contact Northeast Shores at 216.481.7660, ext. 27, or [sbeattie@northeastshores.org](mailto:sbeattie@northeastshores.org). We'll walk you through how to apply for an Artists in Residence Loan and take it from there. We look forward to working with you!

**And what's Artists in Residence?**

Artists in Residence is a two-year initiative to make the North Shore Collinwood neighborhood an even better place for artists to live and work. It's led by Northeast Shores and the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture but also involves a lot of great partners, including NoteWorthy Federal Credit Union. We're rehabbing houses for artists so they can have the dream home they always wanted. We're helping them launch their own storefront businesses. We're giving them grant money to support their neighborhood arts projects. We're lining up a range of resources that make it possible for artists to participate in the transformation of North Shore Collinwood into one of Cleveland's top arts destinations.

**How do you decide whether someone gets approved for a loan?**

We base our lending decisions on the same standards used by other loan programs, such as credit score, collateral you are able to offer on the loan and income stream. At the same time, all of the partners working on this program know the challenges artists can face in securing funding, and we have long track records in helping artists overcome financial hurdles. We're committed to helping you become loan-ready, regardless of your finances. One of the big benefits of Artists in Residence Loans is that you'll be able to participate in space ownership coursework and to develop a personalized financial plan that helps you get ready to take on the loan, all at no cost to you. Along the way to financial literacy, we'll be around to help you with any questions or concerns you have.

**Artists in Residence Loans**

Artists in Residence Loans

NoteWorthy  
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION  
Serving the Arts & Entertainment Community

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP  
FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

Northeast Shores  
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

LINC  
THE KRESGE FOUNDATION  
FORD FOUNDATION  
THE GEORGE GUND FOUNDATION

Interior panels of informational brochure about the loan program

# one size does not fit all



Collinwood Story Project sound check

It's not uncommon for the term "artist" to conjure up the image of a single twenty-something living in a warehouse existing meagerly off their art. While there are certainly artists that fit that demographic, CPAC's Putting Artists on the Map reveals a very different picture.

When we asked nearly 500 greater Cleveland artists about their background, they were more likely above the age of 40 (59.9% of respondents), living in a household with 2 or more people (77.6%), many with household incomes of \$60,000 or more (42.1%). Most earned less than 20% of their income from their artwork (61.7%). They were far more likely to live in a single-family house than an industrial or commercial building (61.4% to 3.8%) and not out of necessity, as 71.9% *prefer* to live in a single-family house. The most common preference was a Colonial-style house in a neighborhood that's safe, walkable and puts them close to other artists, and nearly a third were willing to pay \$1,000 or more monthly for that space.

The truth is there's no such thing as the "typical" artist. As one staff member recommends, "Don't assume all artists are X,Y and Z. They are individuals." The individuals served over 2.5 years were from different backgrounds, with different interests, skill levels and financial capacities. Some were immediately drawn to Collinwood; others knew right away that it wasn't the place for them. Some wanted to live here, some wanted to work here and some just wanted to do project work.

Those variations presented some challenges. Due to artists' different interests and needs, they approached different staff members as their initial points of contact. With multiple staff members engaged, it could get a bit unwieldy monitoring who was being served and how the service was being delivered.

Staff had to balance wanting to be supportive of artists who were less familiar with the neighborhood, space ownership or community arts programming, with avoiding being patronizing to those artists who were already deeply engaged. While the vast majority of artists served gave us high marks on our services, at least one artist felt we missed the mark: "I think these programs are ridiculous and an insult to artists' intelligence. Before developers and architects started following artists around, artists did just fine finding neighborhoods they could afford."

Not all offerings or components were correct for everyone. We believed our job was to help those artists that *did* want to get engaged, all while maintaining respect for them as individuals. One staff member shares that it was critical to value artists as "professionals ... thinking about them as intelligent, thoughtful, strategic individuals that can inform decision-making." Artists might need some assistance to acquire property or to launch a community project, but these were passionate people ready to go.

Take our Artists in Residence grants component. We knew this resource would not be of interest or a good fit for everyone we served. One artist explains that "I'm self-employed full-time as an artist, and it seems like [the Artists in Residence grants] have been a poor fit for my circumstances ... I can only get the grant money if it ties into some sort of community service programming that gets me off track from my work at hand."

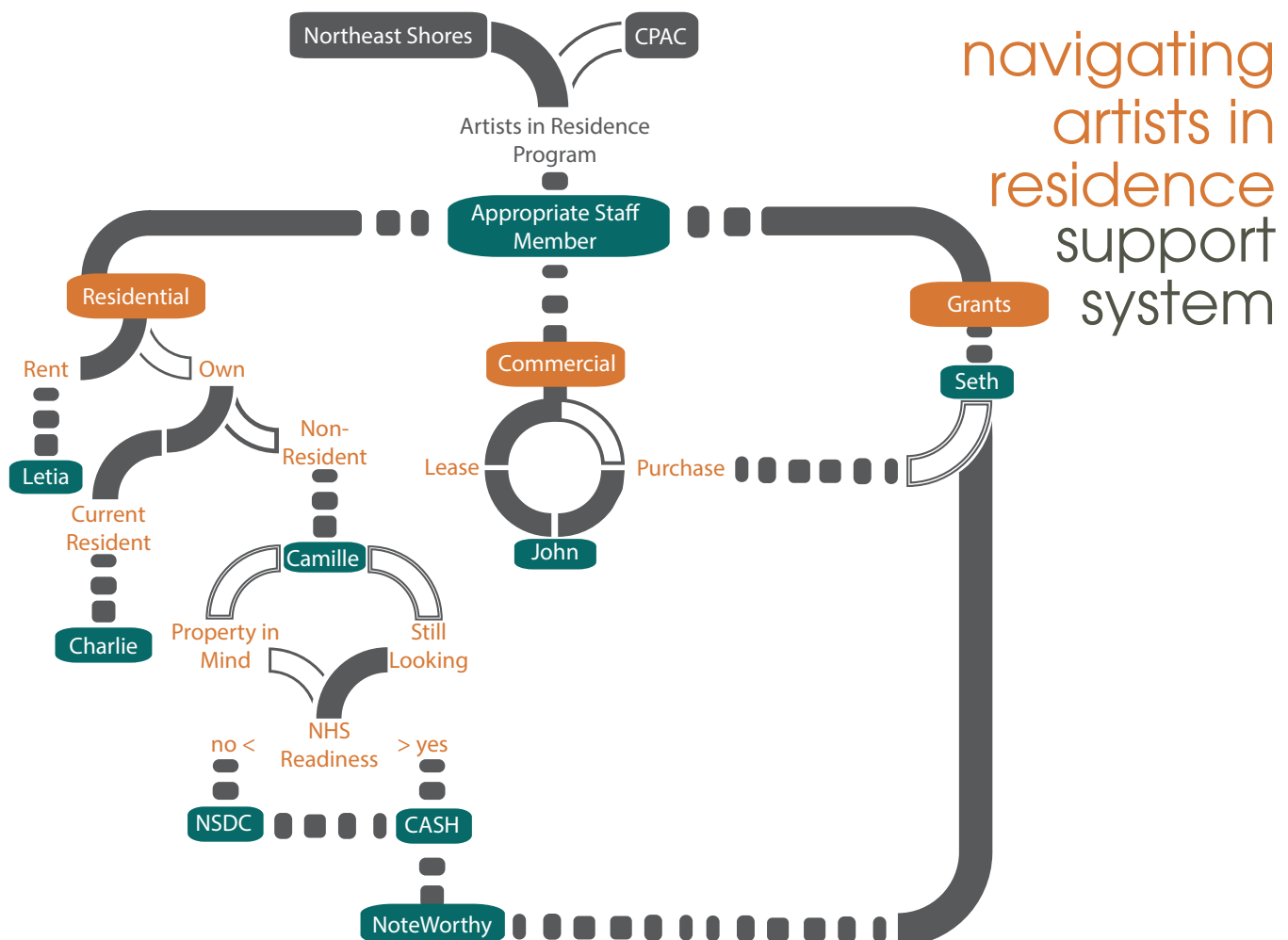


Among those artists who were interested, there were different perspectives on community projects, as well as various levels of community work experience, stages of arts training and understanding of Collinwood. A staff member points out that

*“Artistic work comes in all shapes and sizes ... You need to be prepared to help artists navigate what that placement [of high-quality but challenging work] in community might mean. The flipside is work that might not be of the highest artistic quality but might be more easily accessible for the community. So managing the spectrum of artistic perspective is important, as is communicating that all of that artistic work has value, just potentially different types of value.”*

Some artists needed help managing the “community” and “art” parts of community art projects, but we observed the “project” part of the equation sometimes required assistance. One of the unexpected situations was a number of artists failed to compensate themselves for their time and leadership. Instead, these artists used every grant award dollar for the project. And sometimes their own dollars, too! That can be great for the community in the short-term, but as a Collinwood artist shares, “I think the danger is that people that have these great ideas become slaves to those ideas and don’t take care of themselves. They are likely going to use all the money for their idea, rather than investing in themselves.”

Providing artists with advice about their art, their community engagement or their finances isn’t always easy. Neither is trying to determine how much advice an artist wants. But given the amazing diversity of artists in Cleveland and beyond, we believe a one-size-fits-all approach is wrong.



# increase people's appetite to get involved

then leave plenty of room for creativity



Painted Rain Barrel Project, Linda Zolten Wood



Waterloo Sculpture Garden, Omid Tavakoli



Waterloo Sculpture Garden, Omid Tavakoli



Waterloo Arts Fest in Waterloo Sculpture Garden

CPAC and Northeast Shores always aimed to build more than just artist support programs. We wanted to get artists to be enthused and substantively engaged in Collinwood.

Staff members believed that was accomplished. One notes that “you’re seeing artists more engaged in community issues,” while another shares that “there were artists that were already living in the neighborhood that weren’t engaged, and now they’re coming out.”

Staff pointed to Artists in Residence and Collinwood Rising grants as a driver for heightened artist involvement. One believes that, of all our offerings, the funding programs “had the most impact on Collinwood, both in terms of providing support to artists and bringing folks together to address community issues.” Another points out that grant-funded projects like “the Waterloo Sculpture Garden, Zoetic Walls and the Collinwood Painted Rain Barrel Project seem to have taken on a life of their own, beyond the program funding.”

Artists seem to agree about the impact of grant funding. Artist surveys reveal that 86.1% believe the financial services offered are very important for improving *artists’* circumstances, while 73.5% said the financial services are very important for improving the circumstances of a *neighborhood*.

Collinwood was home to a number of artists who’d been engaged in revitalization from the earliest days of the Waterloo Arts District. Our grant programs brought even more artists to the forefront of community engagement. As one staff member points out,

*“There’s real value in engaging artists in your work beyond the ‘usual suspects.’ If an organization is thinking about doing programming like ours, they’ve probably already identified a group of engaged artist stakeholders ... It’s great to have those voices really engaged in this type of programming, but I think we’ve really benefited from the voices of artists that were less visible and less previously engaged, too.”*





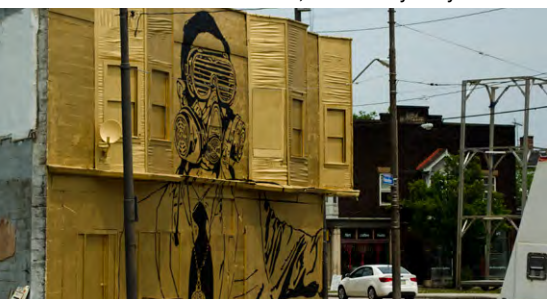
Zoetic Walls, curated by Amy Callahan



Zoetic Walls, curated by Amy Callahan



Zoetic Walls, curated by Amy Callahan



Zoetic Walls, curated by Amy Callahan



There's always an opportunity to recruit more people to get engaged in the neighborhood. One staff member notes we still have work to do on that front, as "I don't think we ever got to the church organist crowd ... The people doing artistic activity in the neighborhood but who probably don't consider themselves artists."

Nonetheless, the programs did draw the interest of 118 artists. Part of the appeal was the funding, of course, but so was the flexibility provided to applicants. Each of the grant programs asked artists a broad question (like "How can art be used to activate vacant property?") and then left it open to artists to propose an answer with art – anything that they could carry out with a limited budget (on average, roughly \$7,200) and in a limited timeframe (anywhere from 1 – 5 months).

By not prescribing a certain project style or requirement to target money toward particular types of expenses, artists were able to propose work from their unique perspectives. A number of artists shared their appreciation with that approach

*"When people have access to money, they aren't stressed, and they have better ideas. Having a relatively uncomplicated process for how funds could get spent allowed us to be creative."*

*"Another thing I think was successful about the grant program ... was the freedom of being able to have access to a relatively unrestricted pot of money that gave us flexibility in approach. It wasn't too scripted."*

Regardless of the approach you take, our work shows that appealing to stakeholders (whether artists or not) can have a huge payoff. You just have to figure out how to tap into the passion that's already there, just below the surface.

## FROM THE FIELD

### City of Asylum

Within Pittsburgh's Mexican War Streets, City of Asylum is building a sanctuary for endangered writers from around the world. In the midst of that safe haven, the organization is empowering those artists to share their work and to play key roles in the neighborhood's revitalization. Their advice:

*"Diverse communities are changed by individuals' sharing space and exchanging narratives. Drawn to a 'safe space'—one without barriers-to-access, where people feel welcome and at home—art then does the work."*

[www.cityofasylumpittsburgh.org](http://www.cityofasylumpittsburgh.org)

## by the **numbers**

### Artists' Changing Views of Collinwood

Prior to starting the Artists in Residence project, Collinwood was a neighborhood with a growing arts district and significant grassroots artistic energy in place. With many artists already taking on such leadership work, could a change in how the creative community views the neighborhood happen? The *Picturing Collinwood* survey suggests the answer is yes. Between 2011 and 2013, there were positive gains among this group on 26 of the 29 categories. A notable exception was a 23.3% drop in the number of artists reporting attendance at three or more Collinwood arts events in the past year. This possibly was due to the growing number of artists engaging with us from outside Cleveland. Below are the most notable changes in artist perceptions of the neighborhood.

	Artists In 2011	Artists in 2013
Number of artist respondents	86	92
Collinwood is unique.	71.4%	83.3%
Collinwood is creative and artistic.	68.2%	80.0%
There's strong community spirit in Collinwood.	41.7%	55.6%
I am proud of the Collinwood neighborhood.	55.9%	71.1%
Collinwood has a lot of good housing options.	55.8%	68.9%
In general, quality of life in Collinwood is good or very good.	31.7%	44.5%
In general, quality of life in Collinwood is bad or very bad.	8.3%	4.4%
In general, Collinwood is changing for the better.	55.8%	78.9%





Collinwood Photo Project, artist Jerry Schmit (pictured);  
Photo by Michael Spear



Painted Rain Barrel at auction, Linda  
Zolten Wood







Jack Storey, Saving Cities presentation

# communication



Waterloo Arts Fest



# make communication a priority

Long before the inception of the artist support programs, the Wall Street Journal had celebrated Northeast Shores' and CPAC's approaches to helping artists become homeowners. Travel + Leisure had labeled Collinwood one of America's "Best Secret Neighborhoods."

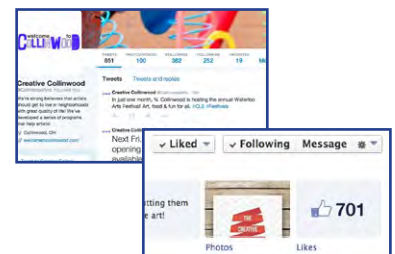
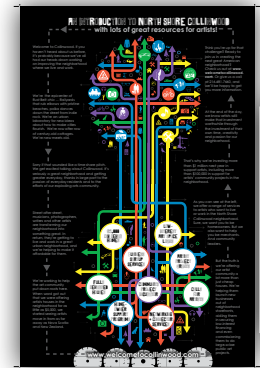
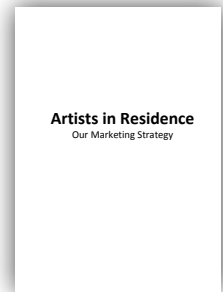
Given that positive buzz, there was a bit of uncertainty around how much more visibility our modest marketing budget could generate for the neighborhood. Approximately \$50,000 was allocated for marketing. Rather than spending it all in one place, smaller amounts of money were invested in a number of various marketing vehicles. A new, artist-focused website, booklet of services and social media accounts, all billed as "Welcome to Collinwood" were developed. We bought print and online advertising and hired a public relations consultant to promote the story. Postcards were mailed to 12,000 households nationwide. A program called Welcome to Cleveland Weekend was designed to provide subsidies for artists outside of Cleveland to spend a weekend and learn more about Cleveland's unique assets.

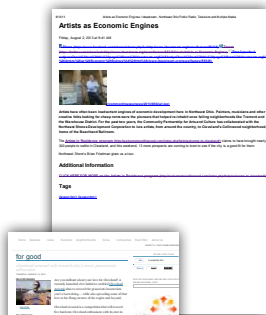
These relatively modest marketing efforts garnered a wealth of regional and national attention. There were 99 different media mentions of the programs (67 in the greater Cleveland area, 9 in other regions and 23 in national publications). In its first year, the Welcome to Collinwood website attracted 7,731 visitors, hailing from places throughout the United States and beyond.

Social media has increased too. Consider that Northeast Shores' Facebook page has been liked 346 times over 33 months (about 10 new likes per month), while CPAC's has been liked 633 times over 38 months (about 17 per month). The Welcome to Collinwood Facebook page, meanwhile, received 530 likes over 6 months producing a higher monthly rate of about 88 likes.

All that heightened visibility has arguably had an immense impact on both Collinwood and the artists that call it home. Several staff members describe what the benefit has been

*"I think you can see evidence of media coverage ... And the inquiries that we're getting. There have absolutely been inquiries, and lots and lots and lots of them ... People's awareness is growing, and their interest level is growing."*





*“For artists to get momentum around their projects, immediately they’ve become visible on a national stage.”*

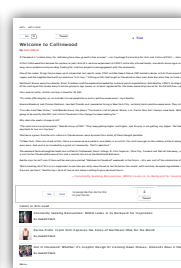
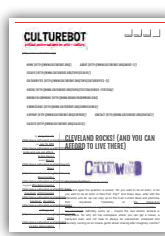
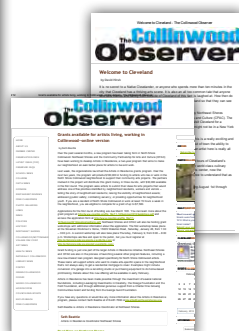
*“The response from people outside of the neighborhood ... validated the work of artists more generally. Artists who already felt this type of investment is important now have something that helps them articulate their case, something to point to.”*

Reaching these outcomes has depended on not only on an overall marketing approach it can also be attributed to individual, person to person communications. People’s impressions of the projects and us might have been shaped by our branding materials, but each meeting, phone call or piece of paper we provided them was also influential. One artist, for instance, was attracted by our overall program but was overwhelmed by our Artists in Residence grant forms: “The forms are difficult to use both technologically and answering questions that don’t fit a given situation. Artists hate forms!”

Staff strived to reach out to artists with as much helpful information as possible. That’s not to say, however, that communication is a one-way street. One staff member notes that “community development across our country is ridiculously understaffed, so be patient. We provide good service, but not necessarily fast service.” A number of artists also advise artists to be proactive about communicating with community development groups and other organizations working to support them. One suggests that, as an artist, you should “Make sure you solicit information and don’t just expect it. Ask question after question after question if you don’t understand something or you’re upset about something.”

Artists should consider communication and marketing as it relates to their projects. Several staff members noted the funded artists seemed to place more emphasis on project planning than on project marketing. At least one artist shares this sentiment: “I ended up not putting money toward marketing, and it’s probably a big mistake. I think...that would be the thing you would want in place.” Another artist recommends that artists “reach out to their community development organizations, particularly to community organizers and to other public service providers (libraries, schools, social service agencies), to learn more about the community and to get feedback on how to reach people in the neighborhood.”

For artists, community development groups and other creative placemakers, frequent and good communication can be critical. Failing to focus on communication as a priority could result in your extraordinary work being widely recognized as a gem by a small group of people and little recognized beyond.





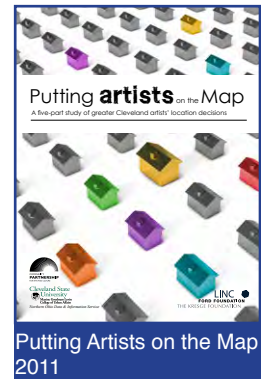
# know your audience

CPAC has been serving local artists for nearly 17 years, and Northeast Shores has been helping artists purchase property since 2004. Nonetheless, a great deal was learned about the artists who would specifically be interested in Artists in Residence and Collinwood Rising.

Attaining a sense of the target market started with research. CPAC's *Putting Artists on the Map* revealed that 72% of artists surveyed would be interested in obtaining affordable homes through the Cuyahoga Land Bank. This data was validation of the potential demand for Northeast Shores' \$6,500 houses. The report also outlined the artists who were most interested in this type of homeownership program – those who were younger, had lower incomes, were currently renting and living in multi-family or industrial buildings.

It was a great start to understanding the artist market. And by providing a data firm with the addresses of artists and homebuyers already in Collinwood, we were able to create an even more nuanced “buyer profile.” Our market was

- Households earning between \$15,000 and \$75,000;
- Individuals between the ages of 22 and 60 with at least a college degree;
- Individuals working in a target occupation (e.g. self-employed, teacher, architect, etc.);
- People that rented their space and had lived at their current address for five years or less; and
- Those who had an expressed interest in both art and rock music.



National marketing was aimed at prospects that resembled the Collinwood artist profile. This put information into the hands of those people who were most likely to appreciate it and respond.

Google Analytics on the Welcome to Collinwood website provided a general sense of where interested artists might be. Initially, we saw that website traffic was widespread. Visitors to the Welcome to Collinwood site came from 174 of the nation's 210 media markets. However, not every media market produced equal amounts of interest. The largest visitation was from the Cleveland-Akron-Canton region at 30.4%. There was also significant traffic from the country's most populated cities, including New York (11.7%), Los Angeles (8.4%) and Chicago (6.8%).

Northeast Shores and CPAC tracked what interested our audience, including how many artists inquired about each of our 28 programs and services. To date, the most popular offerings have been Artists in Residence grants (18.7% of inquiring artists), storefront space (18.4%), Collinwood Rising commissions (16.3%) and \$6,500 houses (15.2%).

Through our monthly e-newsletter, we've also tracked how often users clicked on links. It was somewhat surprising to discover that, by far, the most clicked features were about neighborhood events (35.6% of all clicks). Our online audience thoroughly enjoyed having a better sense of what was happening in Collinwood. When we observed just links for the core artist programs, subscribers clicked most on the artist space link (57.0%), followed by artist grants (33.1%), with artist loans bringing up the rear (9.9%).

The research presented a much better understanding of the artists who might be interested in our programs and what their needs might be; however, there are some caveats to use of the data.

First, while the research has been valuable, client and field experiences have been equally important. Working with 369 artists, staff learned by doing, drawing their own conclusions about who we serve and what they need:

*“For me, it’s almost been a learning curve, because I’m not an artist, learning what an artist wants and [particularly understanding] differences between artists with children and artists without.”*

*“Customer service is really important with working with artists because they are so close to their own work. Many have never been engaged in formalized community processes.”*

These might not be specific data-based perceptions, but staff impressions like these did inform our daily efforts.

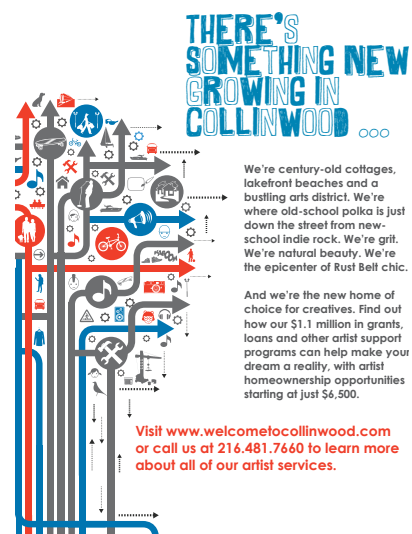
Second, targeting the work hasn’t meant employing a one-size-fits-all approach. Identifying a target market doesn’t mean everyone will fit the standard profile. It allowed us to tailor our marketing and outreach; however, we still worked with people of many backgrounds and retained the flexibility to address multiple interests.

This raises a third point – addressing multiple artist interests may result in multiple target markets. There was strong interest in the homeownership offerings and the Artists in Residence grants. Among the 13 artists who became homeowners, only one applied for an Artists in Residence grant. This might be due to the short timeframe of our work, with artists concentrating on rehabbing their new spaces before getting engaged in community programming. Or it also implies the target market for artist homeownership is different for developing community art projects.

A critically important part of the work was becoming knowledgeable and familiar with the artists we served. Whether through research or learning from one-on-one conversations, there’s always a lot to discover about the people who want to join in placemaking adventures.



Collinwood Homes: Sample marketing imagery



**THERE'S SOMETHING NEW GROWING IN COLLINWOOD**

We're century-old cottages, lakefront beaches and a bustling arts district. We're where old-school police is just down the street from new-school indie rock. We're grit. We're natural beauty. We're the epicenter of Rust Belt chic.

And we're the new home of choice for creatives. Find out how our \$1.1 million in grants, loans and other artist support programs can help make your dream a reality, with artist homeownership opportunities starting at just \$6,500.

Visit [www.welcometocollinwood.com](http://www.welcometocollinwood.com) or call us at 216.481.7660 to learn more about all of our artist services.

Ad for local arts publication, *CAN Journal*

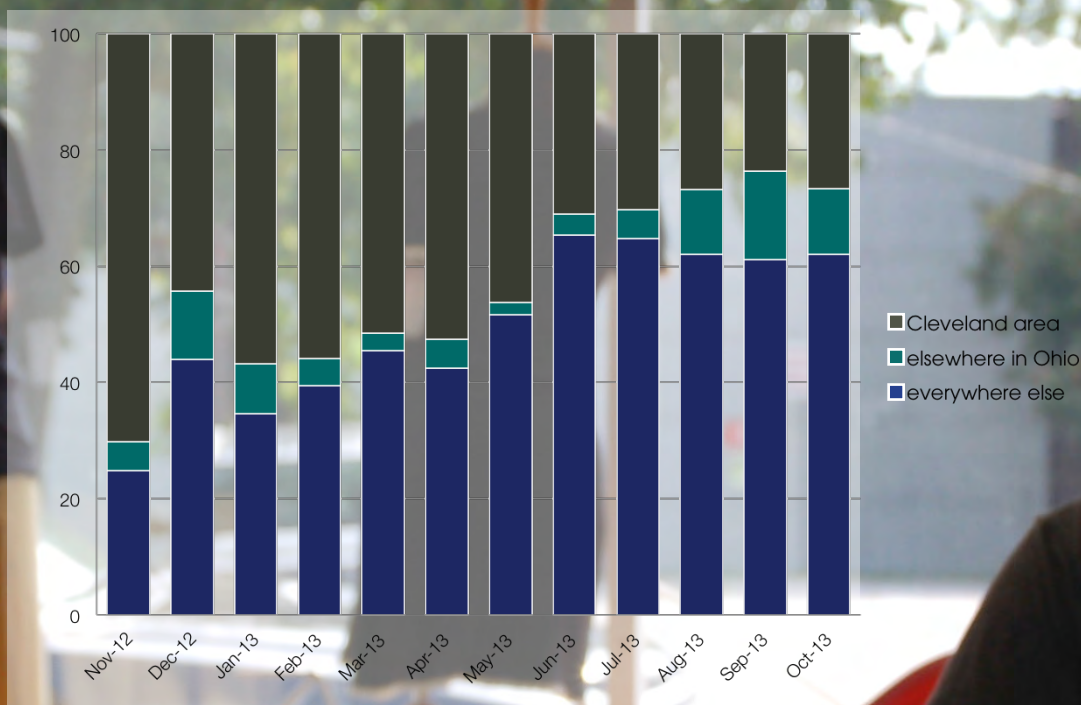


# by the numbers

## taking it national

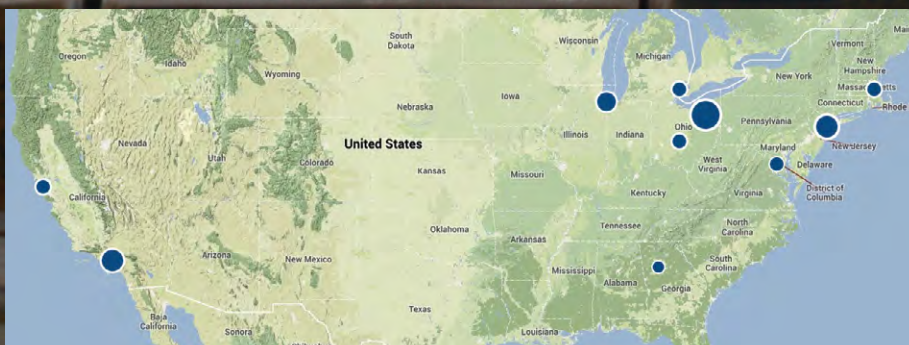
The large number of artists nationwide (and to some extent global) who had interest in the work we're doing in Collinwood is gratifying. The numbers indicate the Welcome to Collinwood website commenced with mostly a local audience. Interest expanded to other areas around the country as time passed. As national visitation has grown, it has become clear precisely where that interest was strongest. The Midwest generated a great deal of visits and so did both the East and West Coasts.

## visits by geography



## top 10 visitor markets

Cleveland-Akron-Canton .....	30.4%
New York .....	11.7%
Los Angeles .....	8.4%
Chicago .....	6.8%
Columbus .....	2.9%
San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose .....	2.5%
Boston-Manchester .....	1.8%
Detroit .....	1.7%
Washington DC .....	1.6%
Atlanta .....	1.3%



# tell a compelling story

Cleveland like many post-industrial cities has had its challenges and set-backs. It has been plagued by population loss and underinvestment. The city has been the punch-line of jokes. That's the past. Cleveland is a place with tremendous quality-of-life and low cost-of-living. So, when we actually showed visitors our great features, they were pleasantly surprised.

Consider our Welcome to Cleveland Weekend. Artists were invited to visit the city and explore our many amenities. The visiting artists' hotel and meal expenses were subsidized and the three-day agenda was packed with opportunities to visit Cleveland neighborhoods and meet local artists.

A group of 10 artists previously indicating serious interest in the support programs participated. At the conclusion of the weekend, there were nine artists seriously contemplating relocation to our city. A couple even broke away to sign leases!

Staff were impressed with the outcomes

*"I think the response of Welcome to Cleveland Weekend participants was a big success ... There's clearly a value proposition that Cleveland could offer for artists nationwide on an even larger scale."*

*"While marketed to out-of-region artists, Welcome to Cleveland Weekend generated a fair amount of interest from artists in greater Cleveland, too. We definitely found an appetite for this type of deep-dive event, not just nationally but locally."*

Artists were too

*"Welcome to Cleveland was a brilliant idea ... I would keep doing these tours to continue to entice people to come."*

*"After this weekend and seeing the investment and support for the Collinwood neighborhood, I'm certain we're going to go forward with buying a property and relocating there. So if your goal was to get people to relocate to the city, chalk up another two on your score board."*



Tonya Broach, Northeast Shores



So if people truly appreciate Cleveland when they get to experience it in person, why do many people we talk to initially have negative impressions? Perhaps it is easier, or more self-serving, for people to rely on an outdated narrative of Cleveland than to take the time and energy to look at who we really are. Whatever the reason, we knew communicating a compelling story of Collinwood was going to be critical to our work. Even though CPAC and Northeast Shores are data-driven organizations, we perceived that a technical explanation of Collinwood would be less than satisfactory

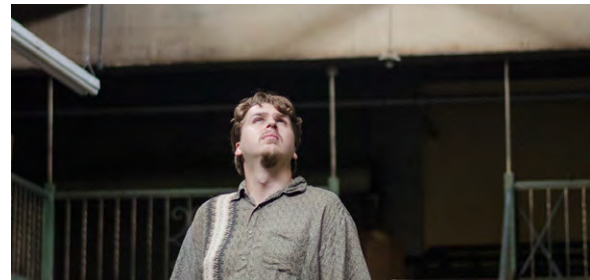
*Collinwood is one of Cleveland's larger neighborhoods, with 16,761 residents and 3,858 families (about half of which have children living at home). The neighborhood is also culturally diverse; as of 2010, it is 67.9% African American and 29.3% Caucasian.*



Welcome to Cleveland Tour

This example of information is statistically accurate. It helps to inform people about Collinwood. But as an introductory story, all that data might be distancing. Likewise, while it's important to acknowledge neighborhood challenges, sounding pessimistic or apologetic achieves nothing either.

*Vacant housing rates in Collinwood have increased considerably, from 7.7% in 1990 to 16.5% in 2010. But these high rates of vacancy provide the neighborhood with an opportunity. Artists have shown that they're willing to take a chance on the community, and vacant properties provide a way to give artists an affordable pathway to achieving homeownership.*



Welcome to Cleveland Tour

Again, this is statistically correct, and it's important for people to understand the neighborhood environment. However, our experience suggests people are drawn here because Collinwood's asset-rich. And fabricating a "fluffy" version of Collinwood's assets is not productive.

*Collinwood has more than 200 years of strong community and a unique approach to neighborhood living. Since the Beachland Ballroom opened and became the country's top indie rock venue, the neighborhood has seen even more success. Artists have flocked here, making it one of the nation's most affordable and most desirable creative communities.*



Artists creating Wheels on Waterloo

Collinwood does have strong community, the Beachland Ballroom is a nationally renowned music venue and artists are relocating here. The neighborhood has plenty of merit that we didn't have to exaggerate it.

Instead, our approach tends to read more like this

*Collinwood has always been industrious. From its lakefront vineyards to its rail yards, the people of Collinwood have always known how to create something of worth. It's still true today. We're building a community that welcomes artists and helps them financially, and artists are engaged in making the neighborhood even better. Together, Collinwood is building a bold new vision for how community can work together to build something amazing.*



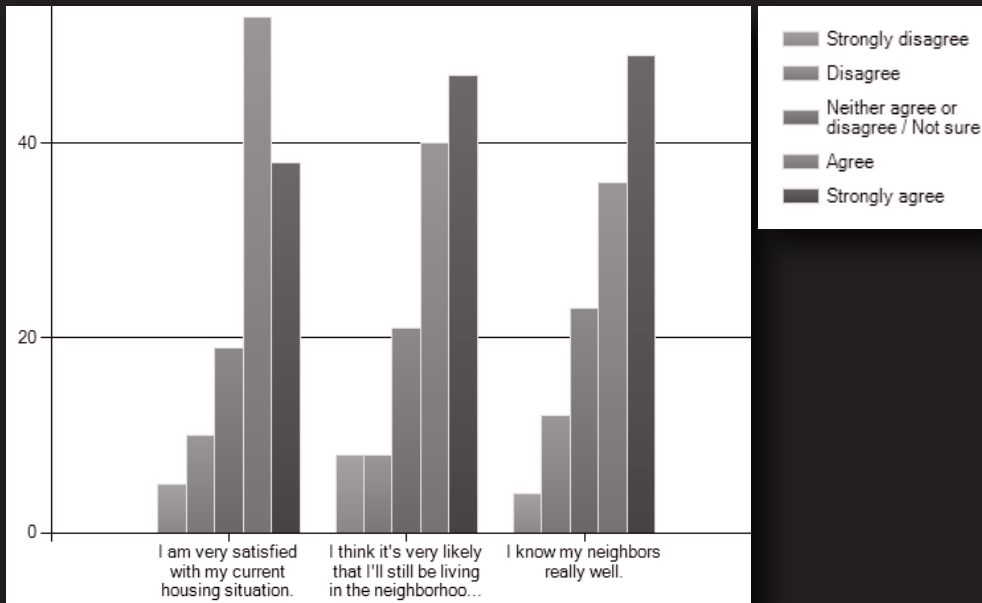
Waterloo postcard mailed nationally

The importance of communicating to people a sense of Collinwood's unique history and its emerging opportunities, acknowledging both its strengths and challenges, conveys this is a place where personal initiative can and does make a difference. It shares that individuals can help shape the neighborhood's future and highlights that Collinwood truly values the contributions that artists make.

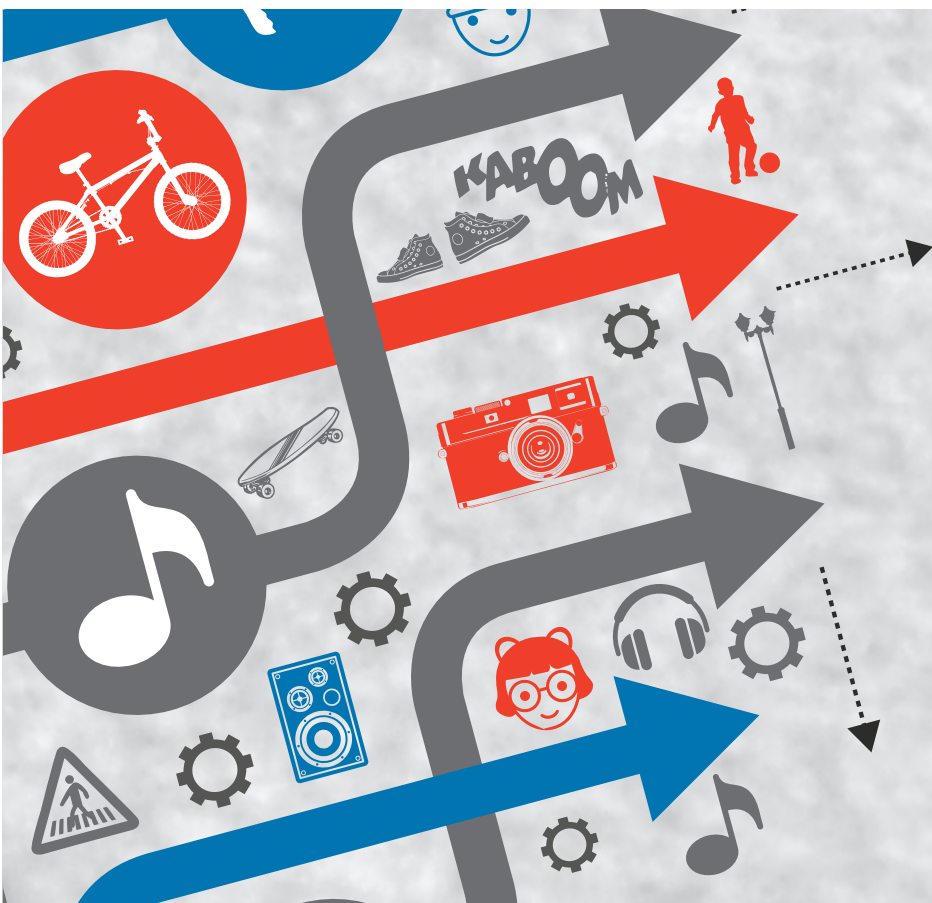
There's no magic formula to this. Telling the story of your community will depend on its particular history, assets, liabilities and the types of support available for its revitalization. Our emphasis on telling an honest and compelling story has helped gradually shift Cleveland's image from punch line to front line.



# Neighborhood CONVERSATIONS



research



How  
Investments  
in Artists are  
Transforming  
Cleveland's  
North Collinwood  
Neighborhood.

# know what you want to know

learn it - and then share it

You've probably realized by now that CPAC and Northeast Shores place a strong emphasis on research, and that's no accident.

While our work is influenced by staff members' practical experience, it's also informed by evidence. We operate from the belief that creative placemaking is an experiment – it's an opportunity to test how the arts can play a role in neighborhood revitalization. Often this is manifested in ways that haven't been attempted in the past. And if creative placemaking is an experiment, it means most questions that emerge can be a research opportunity.

Consider the following two thoughts from artists we've worked with

*"I like art as much as the next guy, but is it really going to improve working people's conditions?"*

*"Make the grants focus towards artists ... under 35. There is something special about young artists; their inexperience [helps] them realize how much potential they actually have."*

These types of value statements could be reframed as questions and studied

*Possible research question: Does art improve working people's conditions?*

*Possible research approach: Define "working people". Survey neighborhood stakeholders about their perceptions' of art's impact on working people's conditions. Track neighborhood-level changes in unemployment rates, median household income and median home values. Select a cohort of residents and, over a period of years, track how their conditions change and how much they attribute that change to arts investments in their community.*

*Possible research question: Do art programs led by artists under 35 have greater impact than those led by artists 35 or over?*

*Possible research approach: Compare community art project interest among artists of different age groups. Compare participation numbers of projects led by younger artists to those of older artists. Survey project participants regarding their satisfaction and perceived impact of participation and compare among projects led by younger artists and older artists.*



Instead of blindly accepting value statements, these beliefs can, and should, be tested. While research and analysis might not be 100% conclusive; it leads to more informed decisions and can aid in articulating how and why an approach is important or not.

A particularly useful protocol has been community surveying. Through the annual *Picturing Collinwood* survey of neighborhood stakeholders, we garnered a better sense of Collinwood resident priorities and tracked their changing perceptions of the neighborhood. This was helpful because some traditional forms of neighborhood data are only available biannually or even every decade. Other data wasn't really being pursued at all in the absence of our surveys. For instance who's collecting data about whether a neighborhood is maintaining its authenticity or measures the level of community spirit?

This type of research was very important to our efforts. It helped gauge how well artists and non-artists in Collinwood were being served. This work comes with limitations. Because just about anything can be measured with enough time and resources, the possibilities can be a bit overwhelming. We concentrated on what questions were most important and committed to those as research imperatives. This was particularly useful in reducing "survey fatigue." Through the *Picturing Collinwood* survey, we've learned it is difficult to keep people motivated to respond annually. We kept the surveys as short and simple as possible to encourage responses. Randomly selecting a few respondents to receive a gift certificate to a neighborhood business was helpful. There's a real appetite, particularly among residents, to see the results of the survey. Sharing what is ascertained helps communicate value to the participants.

The other issue with neighborhood-level surveying is the number of respondents tends to be small. This means increases and decreases from year to year might not be statistically significant. As an example, do different numbers represent real changes in perceptions or are small variations occurring for other reasons? We were always careful not to read too much into the data; treating small survey findings as possible trends, not as overall community conclusions.

Even with the inherent limitations, research is still essential. Experiments aren't always conclusive; however they do present learning opportunities – and that learning produces genuine and lasting change.

## 1. What I Think About Collinwood

Thank you for taking this survey about your experiences in North Collinwood. Your responses will help us to make the neighborhood an even better place to live, work and visit.

**We'd like to know what you think about the North Collinwood neighborhood, but first, please check any of the following that apply.**

- ☐ I live in North Collinwood.
- ☐ I work part-time (30 hours or fewer) in North Collinwood.
- ☐ I work full-time (31 hours or more) in North Collinwood.
- ☐ I do not live or work in North Collinwood, but I visit the neighborhood frequently.
- ☐ I am not very familiar with North Collinwood.

**If you live in North Collinwood, tell us how much you agree with the following statements.  
If you don't live here, you can skip this question.**

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neither agree or disagree / Not sure      Agree      Strongly agree





## by the **numbers**

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### Where All Groups Seem to Agree

The *Picturing Collinwood* survey has been a great tool for Northeast Shores and CPAC, particularly when comparing how attitudes are shifting among different groups: artists versus non-artists; residents versus non-residents; those living in the neighborhood's two zip codes; those that are very involved versus those that feel less involved. Information collected in 2011, 2012 and 2013 show perceptions of the neighborhood are mostly changing for the better with some important variations. The biggest drop has been among artists reporting attendance at three or more art events in Collinwood in the past year (65.7% in 2011 to 31.0% in 2013). The biggest gain has been among non-residents reporting they are proud of Collinwood (44.9% to 72.8%).

Learning how groups differ in their perceptions is important and so is discovering where there's broad agreement. *Picturing Collinwood* revealed what neighborhood indicators had positive increases of 15% or more between 2011 and 2013 – and where all 8 groups that were followed resulted in positive movement.



	2011	2013	Percentage Change
Neighborhood Pride Total % of respondents that agreed with the statement “I am proud of the neighborhood.”	58.2%	77.2%	+19.0%

Artists	55.9%	71.1%	15.2%
Non-Artists	69.5%	84.3%	14.8%
Residents	65.6%	80.0%	14.4%
Non-Residents	44.9%	72.8%	27.9%
44110 Residents	61.2%	82.7%	21.5%
44119 Residents	73.7%	78.6%	4.9%
Very Involved	79.0%	93.9%	14.9%
Not Very Involved	47.7%	50.1%	2.4%

Recreation and Parks Total % of respondents that agreed with the statement “The neighborhood has good access to recreation and parks.”	75.9%	91.1%	+15.2%
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Artists	76.5%	85.4%	8.9%
Non-Artists	81.5%	96.6%	15.1%
Residents	83.6%	97.5%	13.9%
Non-Residents	61.1%	80.0%	18.9%
44110 Residents	83.6%	96.5%	12.9%
44119 Residents	86.9%	98.3%	11.4%
Very Involved	89.7%	91.8%	2.1%
Not Very Involved	69.6%	84.4%	14.8%

Good Housing Options Total % of respondents that agreed with the statement “The neighborhood has a lot of housing options.”	56.8%	71.9%	+15.1%
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Artists	55.8%	68.9%	13.1%
Non-Artists	62.9%	76.1%	13.2%
Residents	66.7%	75.8%	9.1%
Non-Residents	37.5%	64.3%	26.8%
44110 Residents	60.3%	67.2%	6.9%
44119 Residents	77.1%	83.9%	6.8%
Very Involved	79.5%	79.6%	0.1%
Not Very Involved	52.2%	65.6%	13.4%

Change for the Better Total % of respondents that agreed with the statement “North Collinwood is changing for the better.”	53.8%	71.2%	+17.4%
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Artists	55.8%	78.9%	23.1%
Non-Artists	50.0%	62.5%	12.5%
Residents	43.5%	55.8%	12.3%
Non-Residents	71.9%	95.7%	23.8%
44110 Residents	58.8%	77.2%	18.4%
44119 Residents	29.5%	35.7%	6.2%
Very Involved	64.1%	87.8%	23.7%
Not Very Involved	51.1%	75.0%	23.9%



what's next  
where we go from here



Creative placemaking is a journey, not a destination.

Our communities have been shaped by years of history and they will be shaped by countless years of future exploration, innovation, hurdles and victories. A place will retain a certain something, while still being subject to perpetual change – that’s what makes virtually every community important, unique and worthy of investment.

The roles of CPAC and Northeast Shores in creative placemaking will likely evolve too. Our organizations will adapt to changing circumstances, but that doesn’t diminish our commitment to the goal of improving the well-being of our community and its artists.

CPAC will continue to look for ways to strengthen greater Cleveland’s arts and culture sector. 2014 will be a year that CPAC tackle’s greater civic engagement of the arts and culture sector; measures the economic values of the craft, design and visual arts sector and explores the intersections between Cleveland’s arts and culture and health and human services assets.

Northeast Shores will continue to look for ways to strengthen the Collinwood neighborhood, and artists will continue to factor large in that effort. Thanks to generous support from The Kresge Foundation, Northeast Shores is already beginning to fund community art projects that drive visitation to the arts district during streetscape construction. 2014 will be the year that Northeast Shores scales up its efforts to provide artists with live/work rental opportunities and to engage the neighborhood in participatory budgeting. This effort will give residents and business owners a more direct voice in how neighborhood arts investments are made.

Collinwood itself will continue to grow and physically change. Next year, the bulldozers will be gone, and in their place, new benches, public art, lighting and greenery will appear. But that doesn’t mean construction won’t be occurring; it will just be the ongoing construction of a creative community. New artists will arrive, new businesses will open, new community projects will launch. The future will continue to write itself, with hundreds of stakeholders together creating the story.

Already, artists have ideas for what should come next that includes funding for sustainable retrofitting of housing; more lease-own options; and grants to artists to make property improvements.

And artists have ideas for you and your community, too

*“Look to these programs for inspiration, and stick with what works. If there is anything that they feel the need to change, they need to really examine why. This system works, and works well.”*

*“I would tell other communities that this collaboration is a positive win for everybody, the artist, the community and the city. I think it is imperative to have art related communities for the future development of that neighborhood.”*

And one of our absolute favorite suggestions

*“Don’t be discouraged. Don’t believe your own hype either. It will take hard work and determination but you will succeed.”*

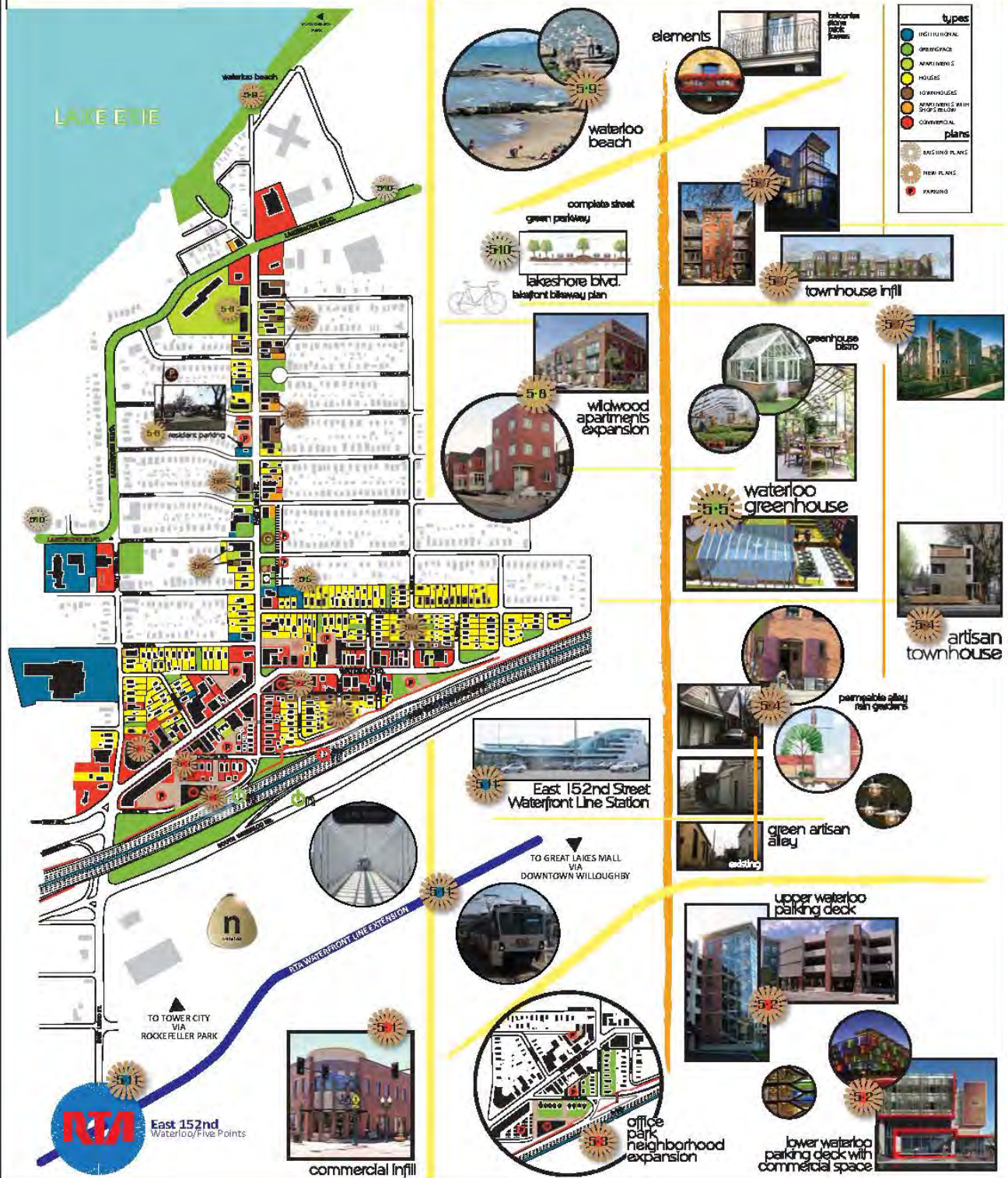
We couldn’t agree more. There’s success in the trying. This is what we believe. This is what we’ve experienced. And if your experiences are one-tenth as rewarding and meaningful as ours have been with Artists in Residence and Collinwood Rising, we think you’ll be very glad you tried.

04.21

waterloo 5.0 - 10.0 yr plan

# Connecting Collinwood

completing and connecting east 156th st.



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - CITY OF CLEVELAND



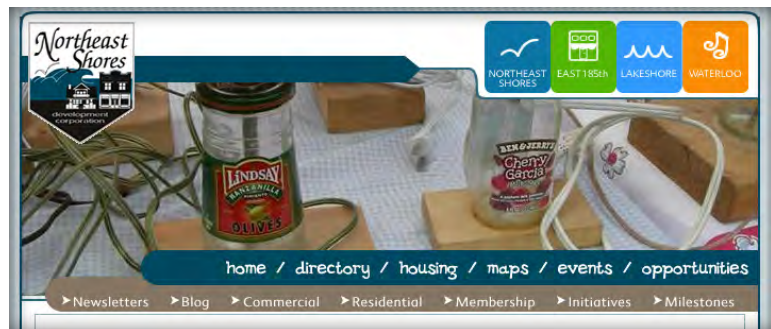
Follow ongoing work with CPAC and Northeast Shores at the following websites.



CPAC

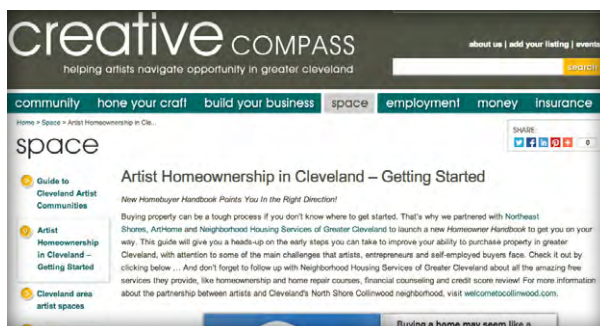
[www.cultureforward.org](http://www.cultureforward.org)

Northeast Shores  
[www.northeastshores.org](http://www.northeastshores.org)



artist services

Creative Compass



[www.myCreativeCompass.org](http://www.myCreativeCompass.org)

Welcome to Collinwood



[www.WelcometoCollinwood.com](http://www.WelcometoCollinwood.com)

# lessons learned

## an abbreviated list

### Planning

1. Know what makes your community strong – then make it even stronger
2. Take time with planning – and make sure to plan for success
3. It takes funding – but not always as much as you think
4. Artists are valuable – and should be valued – but they aren't a silver bullet

### Management

5. This is going to take time and energy
6. Prioritize your goals
7. Make time to build meaningful relationships

### Implementation

8. Start small – but build for the big
9. Be flexible and adaptable – and acknowledge when things aren't working
10. One size does not fit all
11. Increase people's appetite to get involved – then leave plenty of room for creativity

### Communication

12. Make communication a priority
13. Know your audience
14. Tell a compelling story

### Research

15. Know what you want to know, learn it – and then share it



Artists in Residence





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# many thanks

## Project Support

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WARD 8

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