



CAPTIVATE

THE CAPITAL REGION'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Region Selected as Finalist in Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge

Albany/Schenectady/Troy Submission One of 12 National Finalists in the Running to Receive Up to \$1 Million for Public Art Project

ALBANY, NY – March 5, 2015 – Bloomberg Philanthropies today announced that the entry jointly submitted by the cities of Albany, Schenectady and Troy has been selected as a finalist in the running to receive up to \$1 million as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge, a new program aimed at supporting temporary public art projects that engage communities, enhance creativity, and enrich the vibrancy of cities. The Capital Region, along with eleven other cities, has been invited to submit a full proposal.

The joint submission from Albany, Schenectady and Troy proposes to illuminate up to 500 vacant homes nightly over two months (timeframe to be determined). Working with artist Adam Frelin and more than 25 community and private sector partners, including the Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, this multi-site installation aims to regenerate interest in once-vibrant neighborhoods that currently have high vacancy rates. This consortium proposes to culminate the project with a regional summit on vacant homes and abandoned buildings to engage local residents, prospective buyers and investors, and policy makers.

“The success of this proposal is about the power of collaborations,” said Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan. “We are proud to be part of this partnership between talented artists, three great upstate cities, and a host of Capital Region community groups.”

“The cities of Albany, Schenectady and Troy are very fortunate to be composed of residents who are both creative and passionate,” said Troy Mayor Lou Rosamilia. “It is very exciting news that we have been selected as a finalist for the Public Arts Challenge and we look forward to continuing our work together to make this project a reality.”

“I am excited to see our partnership between Albany, Schenectady, and Troy’s arts and vibrant creative community become a finalist for the Public Arts Challenge,” said Schenectady Mayor Gary McCarthy. “The arts are critical to making our communities even more desirable and enjoyable for current residents, potential residents and visitors. We have seen the positive power of the arts in Schenectady’s renaissance and are committed to seeing this partnership through to its successful benefit for the region.”

“The Center for Economic Growth is proud to be part of this exciting project,” said F. Michael Tucker, President and CEO of the Center for Economic Growth. “One of the primary goals of the Capital Region Creative Economy Project is to galvanize our communities around artistic endeavors, and leverage that energy and enthusiasm to drive our regional economy. To have been selected as a finalist in this national competition shows us that we are on the right path and taking the right steps toward regional economic growth.”

“Today’s announcement is wonderful news for the Community Foundation, our partners in the Regional Alliance for a Creative Economy, and the cities of Albany, Schenectady and Troy,” said Karen Bilowith, President and CEO of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region. “This region has a wealth of world-class creative assets, and it’s an honor to receive national recognition of our efforts to bring together our creative people and places for this innovative project.”

“Beyond everything else we want this project to accomplish, it has to have artistic integrity. It has to be visually and conceptually strong. It needs to have the right type of visual impact that will allow anyone to be drawn to it,” said Adam Frelin. “At the risk of sounding overly confident, I truly believe that Breathing Lights is capable of accomplishing all of this.”

“I am excited about engaging the public as we transform zombie buildings into lanterns that shine a light on their community. Stories of the neighborhood’s past, present and hopes for the future will be captured and exhibited along with the buildings, like conversation around a campfire. The process will highlight the human impacts of abandoned property and the potential for reuse of these buildings,” said Barb Nelson, AIA, one of the creators of the Capital Region public art project.

“The students of the Lighting Workshop at RPI’s Lighting Research Center are thrilled to be involved in this effort. We are already testing technologies and mocking up prototypes to assist the capital region in winning this prestigious award,” said Professor Russ Leslie, Associate Director for RPI’s Lighting Research Center.

In late 2014, Bloomberg Philanthropies invited mayors of U.S. cities with 30,000 residents or more to submit proposals for innovative temporary public art projects that address a civic concern, and demonstrate close collaboration between artists or arts organizations and city government. More than 230 cities submitted proposals for consideration in the Public Art Challenge, representing 68 million residents across the United States.

Cities of all sizes applied: nearly 50% of the 237 submissions were from cities with populations between 30,000 and 100,000, 38% had populations between 100,000 and 500,000, and 13% of the applicant cities had over 500,000 residents. A variety of artistic disciplines were represented amongst the applications: 61% of the proposed public art projects involved visual art, 19% combined multiple disciplines, 17% featured digital media, and 3% were performing art projects.

The Public Art Challenge grant will cover development, execution and project related expenditures but will not fund 100% of project costs. The grant is intended to provide catalytic funds as part of a strong, committed consortium of supporters. At least three winning cities will be selected in May to execute their projects over a maximum of 24 months. More information about the Public Art Challenge can be found on www.bloomberg.org/program/arts/#public-art-challenge.

This initiative is in alignment with the work of the Regional Alliance for a Creative Economy's Capital Region Creative Economy Project (for more information on the Regional Alliance for a Creative Economy and the Capital Region Creative Economy Project, please visit UpstateCreative.org). The joint application also reflects the growing trend toward collaboration between local cities, municipalities, businesses and nonprofit organizations to encourage projects and initiatives that benefit the entire region.

ABOUT THE REGIONAL ALLIANCE FOR A CREATIVE ECONOMY

The Regional Alliance for a Creative Economy is a community-selected assembly of Capital Region leaders working on behalf of the region's creative economy. This project operates under the leadership of the Center for Economic Growth and the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region.

The Creative Economy of New York's Capital Region encompasses the enterprises and people involved in the origination, production, and distribution of goods and services in which artistic and cultural content gives the product or service value in the marketplace.

The Capital Region Creative Economy project has been designed to assess our region's creative assets and develop ways to leverage related economic development opportunities (e.g. travel and tourism, local economic and infrastructure development, workforce development, etc.). This community-based, collaborative initiative will examine the creative sector, including the arts (performing, literary, visual), design (graphics, fashion), textiles, crafts, architecture, communications and marketing, cinema and film, broadcasting, software development, publishing and printing, cultural and educational institutions, craft beer brewing and distilleries, culinary arts, and more. The project activities span Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren and Washington counties.

For more information and a full list of partners, visit www.UpstateCreative.org.

ABOUT BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES

Bloomberg Philanthropies' mission is to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: Public Health, Environment, Education, Government Innovation and the Arts. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael

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