

StreamBox

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>>> Hi, everyone. We are just waiting a few minutes as people are trickling in. Thank you for your patience.

>>> All right, we should start. Thank you for joining us for inspired art impact. I'm Anjuli. And I'm here with Madison Kennedy. Many of you may be familiar with her from the Main Street art program. Before we start, I would like to share some quick information about supports available for this event. We have live transcription available in the link in the chat. And you can also toggle this on through Zoom. And which is provided by Canadian Hearing Services. We also have two ASL interpreters with us from the event. Rogue and Matt.

Videos will be spot lit for the full duration of the event. And you can post questions in the chat, which is monitored by STEPS Public Art staff. The event is being recorded as well. And there is going to be a transcript, which will be available on a full dedicated web page on our website. That will also be posted in the chat.

Before by kick off, I would like to share our land acknowledgment. Coming from a personal perspective, I am a settler of mixed heritage from Indian and German descent. I'm framing my own personal responsibilities to reconciliation. From the perspective of STEPS as an organization, though we work across the country, our office is based on the ancestral Wendat territory and the shared territory of the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee covered by the Dish With One Spoon treaty and the later with the Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the credit and the Williams Treaties signed with the Mississaugas and Chippewa bands. As a local organization we acknowledge and are grateful for this land on which we work, play and create that is still home to Indigenous People across Turtle Island. STEPS is committed to cultivating safe spaces for Indigenous voices to be heard. As we present as guests here today we encourage you to look at the land which you live. We introduce steps going over what creative place is from STEPS context and diving into our toolkit which we will be sharing the project overview key findings and lessons learned. This will be followed by some of the next steps in the BIA research we are doing including introduction to the accessibility toolkit which we have been undertaking this year. Concluding our presentation we will have about 10 minutes for question and answer period. I will pass it over to Sam to begin the presentation.

>> SAM MITJAVILE: Thank you, Anjuli. So let's take a minute to, I will just wait a second, let's take a minute to introduce ourselves a bit more.

STEPS is a charitable cultural organization, fostering vibrant communities. To do that we develop One-of-a-kind Public Art lands, installations and engagement strategies. At STEPS we believe that Public Art has the ability to challenge the systemic that exists in building space. We believe that Public Art should be a need to have for all public spaces, reflect

diversity of communities that host it, first of people's ownership of public space, challenge Ascensions about the world and people we share it with as well as invite engagement at every opportunity.

The development of Public Art that contributes to public spaces into vibrant places we give a range of activities which you see listed on the slide. We support the production of Public Art through commission curation and public management and developed artist capacity building programs to help artists from equity deserving communities, and developed work of programs which has created space and for other equity deserving artists across Canada and residency and mentorship program in which an experienced Public Artist leads a cohort of mentees with upcycled materials. Community engagement is at the heart of what we do. We have production programs and develop specific engagement strategies to showcase the perspectives of local communities.

And lastly, we develop Public Art plans and policies and conduct research such as what we present today to explore the benefits of Public Art.

Through this work, STEPS inspire cities across Canada and around the world to create welcoming public spaces that reflect local communities artistic excellence. We are approach something of Canada's not just in most community engaged art initiatives of which you see a few here. And you see project in a wide range of medium press small place to large scale murals and creations.

So what is creative place making? I will highlight that for the purposes of this presentation and the ways we do our work we use creative place making and creative place keeping. Creative place keeping is reimagine public places for. That means creating healthier more accessible and welcoming public spaces for community well-being.

Creative place making incorporates art and culture revitalize public spaces stimulate the economy and anchor community partiescation to create spaces reflective of the diverse identities that use them. This process recognizes the heritage residential communities, and diverse uses of the targeted area to position people as a makers of space so that they can define their own neighborhood. And I will pass it on to my colleague, Madison, to present the inspired project.

>> MADISON KENNEDY: Thank you so much, Sam.

So we will dive in more about the inspired art impact project.

Last spring, STEPS worked to Toronto Metropolitan university support from City of Toronto's min street Innovation Fund. As part of the Government of Canada's support to the federal economic development agency as well as MITACS, nchts RBC bank, Arts Council and Canada arts. We worked together to research and pilot study that would result in the toolkit as a reresult for toolkit area as a business of Main Street. Identifying experience working with BIAs along side our own Public Art projects, even Public Art can bring social economic and cultural benefits to a community.

As well as mitigate the impact of COVID-19. There is a lack of tools it access the benefits to assess benefits of Public Art which limits learning from projects and hinders access to investments. Furthermore, there are limited resources available to aid in the evaluation of the impacts of Public Art installations. Particularly at a local level making it very difficult for

organizations to make strategic decisions and describe and communicate these positive impacts Public Art has to stakeholders.

The creation of the inspired art impact toolkit supported the BIAs in evaluation in describing an economic social and cultural impacts. Public Art initiatives on businesses. To ensure easy use by BIAs no matter size or Public Art initiatives the toolkit is ready to use featuring clear guidelines which are complimented by Public Art and tools. Understanding that even with toolkits some BIAs may not have the capacity to lead outreach or make the case of Public Art. Findings are to public projects are shared in the toolkit and allow BIAs to show these to key stakeholders and prove impacts of Public Art have on neighborhoods. The toolkit was piloted in BIAs in Toronto and we intend for this toolkit to be used within other BIAs within the municipality but can also be used in BIAs nationwide, not just strict and contained to Toronto.

Our hope is that the toolkit providing easy to use assessment tools can help BIAs and other stakeholders make more informed decisions about their support for Public Art initiatives by having research-based evidence of the impacts of their investments. We hope that it helps communicate the impact of Public Art creations to their stakeholders and to allow them to advocate continued support for Public Art.

Finally, we hope the toolkit includes guidelines for implementation of toolkits and cover a variety of topics such as permitting and best practices for engaging artists which we hope will help stakeholders implement projects more effectively and in a by that fully benefits communities and creatives.

Our methodology which informed the development of the final toolkit afive distinct stages. Starting with academic literature and industry reports. This includes looking at studies on impacts of Public Art and initiatives of Public Art impact. In collaboration, the Toronto Metropolitan University research team, toolkit developed based on a thorough review of previous studies and in-depth consultation process. This ensured the toolkit would focus on impacts that could be reasonably expected from Public Art and contain measurement methods that have been proven effective.

We consulted a variety of stakeholders with the impact of Public Art and the primary groups that benefit from it and that includes residents, visitors and businesses.

We conducted 10 qualitative interviews of key stakeholders, this included local BIAs, residents, community stakeholders, and government representatives.

And in addition we surveyed 15 Toronto BIAs.

Based on this knowledge collected, we developed a toolkit resource. To verify and improve the use of the toolkit recommendations and tested them on two BIAs that were chosen for very contrasting profiles. So make sure we have the best by choosing these very different BIAs.

This also allows to include implementation of beneficial Public Art initiatives in our process. These pilot studies were launched in Toronto's BIAs which is located outside of downtown in the west end of Toronto in riverside, BIA. Which has a closer prosm nation to downtown and is located on queen street east. I think with the creation of the mural titled sharing stories of migration, my artist Moses, aka, known as love someone, and interactive works

titled "you are here" by Megan chen in riverside.

The toolkit was then updated based on findings by the pilot projects to ensure the toolkits use of operation we developed ready to use surveys, included details and accessible recommendations for each phrase and of measurements and included key initial questions determined the scope of focus, measurement got a collection method and challenges. And analyzing of results and how you could present the findings. Alongside the added valuable tools to help guide the creation of Public Art initiatives.

We wrote a review of academic literature and industry reports as well as surveys and interview process and by key benefits that can be generated through Public Art initiatives. These benefits help BIAs culturally and economically. Go through a few benefit first.

Improving life and happiness and well-being and in the community more livable. And it can contribute to community pride especially if the work reflects and involved the community. And improves quality of street scapes making the area more attractive and a more fun place to experience for visitors.

Public Art can be instrumental in developing social connection and the sense of community through its development and presence and a sense of community, ownership and often translates into other social benefits and like improved care of the environment and the reduction of vandalism.

And finally, create beautiful gathering space for residents and visitors alike to come together and socialize.

Some of the key cultural benefits include being an effective tool in storytelling within urban areas and can communicate messages about culture, history, politics and social issues by being in the media to share information and educate the public. It can spark dialogue for connection among viewers and aid in building stronger public ties. It can communicate culture, and appreciation for local heritage and can represent identity of the community. Helping people to identify with the art can create a renewed connection to the space of community.

It also makes art more accessible to the public as it can be enjoyed by a broad audience regardless of the background they come from. So age, ability, income. Everyone is able to enjoy these pieces. By having them outside of the traditional gallery an museum spaces and it further democratized art and culture. Making it more accessible.

Economic benefits of Public Art include the fact that it tracks residents and visitors to spend time as Public Art contributes to aesthetic and experience of a space. So by people spending more time in the area, therefore, they are likely to spend more money and the local businesses around the Public Art installation. Frgs.

And in particular, public tourism development and often communicates and represents local culture, making it a valuable asset and attracting and developing cultural tourism and destination image development.

It also provides unique localized branding and marketing opportunities. And as well as initiates valuable marketing.

I'm sure you have all been told to go visit a certain area because of the cool installation of Public Art piece. So I'm sure you have experienced this firsthand.

Public Art also aides in the revitalization of urban areas and can be integral factor in attracting new businesses to the community. Furthermore these new businesses bring attention additional employment opportunities and Public Art makes more attractive and enjoyable place to live, work and pli. I will pass it back to my colleague, Sam, now.

>> SAM MITJAVILE: Thank you, Madison. So pulling this all together, the outcome is a detailed ready to use toolkit that includes first detailed advice for each phase of an assessment initiative, including the recollection considerations, recommendations touching on ethics and privacy as well as challenges in the recollection when using different tools. We have given advice on which to use when. Which I will outline in a minute. And as well as tips on how to show findings.

We have also included complete ready to use tools from the collection to help BIAs assistance, that include survey, Public Art observation worksheet as well as social media templates. Lastly, as my colleague mentioned, we also included Public Art implementation tools to help stakeholders who might be new to developing Public Art initiatives, kick start the process that includes hard to define project goals, select a site and situations as well as recommendations on how to conduct a site and best practices for hiring and working with artists. It is designed to be flexible as well as adapt it a new situation. We included presentations and descriptions for a variety of tools so that the right methods can be selected based on stakeholders unique needs.

We wanted to highlight a few key questions to take into consideration when starting an assessment to help you select the right method or methods to use. So first, why that includes determining what purpose the debt them self and some of the questions you might ask yourself include will this for instance use to make decisions about future public projects or is the goal to advocate for instance through communicating impacts to stakeholders like Board of Directors to apply for funding for Public Art.

You might also ask yourself if the plan is to advocate for specific initiatives to collect results that can be compared with the impact of Public Art at other areas.

With this in mind, you can start looking at the what. So what specific information are you hoping to gain a deeper understanding of. For instance, is the goal to look at something specific like a Public Arts impact on foot traffic or how Public Art impacts one particular group, like residents, visitors or businesses? Or on the other hand, are you interested in getting a broader understanding of how it impacts a whole community as well as is the goal -- sorry, impacts of Public Art in the community of a whole or to assess the one's impact of a specific installation. Practical considerations will determine which tool you can use.

Looking first at what we resource and specifically Human Resources can be pulled to conduct assessment and how much labor time you can allocate this initiative and determining who will link the initiative, staff members that vote, volunteers, students and other participants. And that can also include identifying what skills and abilities people responsible for this initiative bring. And so the type of methods of the recollection they might be most able to implement.

When looking at the timeline, obviously you should consider how much time you are able to commit to the initiative as well as when you need the recollection to be determine eld.

And you can also consider when the goal is to have one-time data collection or if it is worthwhile to repeat collection before it changes all the time. For instance conducting service at regular intervals, every six months, once a year or every time a new business is installed in the community.

The timeline should also be established with the timeline for the art installation in self in mind. For instance, you want to collect data before and after the art is installed. Do you want to conduct an evaluation at the very initial stages right when the office has been installed or would it be meaningful for the purpose you have in mind for first impacts to develop all the time before collecting data.

And the last group of practical considerations is looking at the location to ensure you've planted within and you don't disrupt local users of the space. That include making sure communication has been conducting with businesses. If you are planning to so businesses are displaying and making sure that surveys have been informed and trained and can be straight forward and disrupting business operation and activities. Another question you might ask yourself is if you have appropriate spaces for instance. And do have you space available for interviews or focus groups.

So based on answers to these questions, different options might be appropriate. The categories of the methods which you will see listed here and we have included for each of them advice on their implementation. And including advice on data collection itself. And outreach. We have listed key advantages and these advantages for each collection method to help you determine which tool would be most appropriate based on your unique services objectives and challenges.

So these are general considerations and I will present them briefly.

First survey with a time of recollection and they often require minimal layer or potentially large group of people.

They also help gathered data this can be easily compared. And thanks to standardization. And the standardization is that you may not fully capture the experience.

On the other end of the spectrum are interviews. So specifically one on one interviews allow for more flexibility. For interviewees it raise points, they think that are important, that you might not have considered. And for interviewers to ask probing questions. And as a result, these are fuller understanding of people's experiences. And obviously the limit of it is time consuming. And there is also a risk of having an effect specifically of both feeling sure to answer in a way. You might want to consider focus groups, which can also provide a rich understanding of people's experiences and thoughts. And but in addition, the benefit of bringing together and confronting different perspectives.

And attention if you have focus groups and that some people might be less comfortable in group settings. And it is important as to make sure that every voice is heard.

These are time-consuming and challenging to coordinate. We concluded as you mentioned above an observation worksheet for Public Art. And with I think this is a valuable tool and first time understanding in the space, in the actual environment. And the limits to that is that you can only observe people's behaviors and vast experiences and it is also often that it might be difficult to compare. And it might require certain stuff to lead a meaningful

observation.

The last tools are foot traffic and counting. And many stakeholders and specifically BIAs already have devices installed. It is something that can be automated. And provides that it is easy and comfortable. And the limit is that it is hard to isolate and the impact from the factors on foot traffic and devices you have available might not be installed.

Lastly, we have included a few notes and recommendations on social media tracking. And tracking the public social media activity is a complex task that often requires services of a specialized external vendors.

But there is a more easily tracked method by BIA art and you are only measuring actions of people who already have actions and you can only track basic measures.

As you mentioned, the toolkit outlines eight different impact and assessment options with ready to use tools. We have been including service for different groups. And as well as interviews, focus guides, focus group guides, foot traffic options, will observation worksheet and advice on social media tracking implementation.

Next slide, please. So as Madison mentioned, the first pilot study was conducted in riverside BIA which is a BIA in Toronto that is located to a car which has a long history of implementing Public Art projects. This project we created an interactive layer installation that prak et patterns of movement of people and reflected that through lights and patterns.

We wanted to show a short video so you can get a sense of how the installation worked as well as hear from the artist, Megan, who is also a participate in our create space residency program.

Thank you. Next slide, please.

So we have used a toolkit to evaluate the impact of Public Art has had in riverside over all. And through a survey of 58 residents. Now we have the key points. 89% of respondents agree that Public Art in the area makes them appreciate the art accessible to them. 84% of respondents agree that Public Art makes them think more positively about the area. 83% of the spoo respondents agro gree it improvs the appearance of the area and lastly 74% of respondents agree it makes them want it spend more time in the area which might correlate with more increased spending in local businesses.

With that we would highlight some of the feedback we received from some of the public and also two quotes which you will see in the last sendment. So last night I made sure I was on that side of the street like it was such a mind escape. It was fun. I felt like a kid. And another, interactive art is so fun. I found out that the more traffic that goes by, the brighter the art gets. I'll definitely be telling people about the art walk. The second pilot project was conducted in Eglinton hill. Which is in Toronto outside of the downtown area. This is also a neighborhood improvement area.

With a significantly different demographic than riverside. The area is less dense than riverside. And has been significantly impacted by municipal construction projects and was the first time that BIA developed Public Art initiative.

For this project we work local artist Moses Frank to create a mural called sharing stories of migration and integrated local youth mentorship and capacity building in the project and

the artwork you see here, a local drummer playing an important role in the area. We used a toolkit to evaluate the impact of this mural for a survey of residents. And the other key information collected. A hundred percent of respondents agree that the installation makes everything more presentable about the area. 88% of respondents agree it makes them feel happier. 82% agree it makes them want to spend more time in the area and lastly agree it improves their experience of the area.

We wanted to share a quote by the artist, Moses Frank that outlines the significance of the mural and explains why this specific theme was chosen. So Moses said with the mural at the edge of Little Jamaica where there are a lot of black people. With and having Saikou, a black powerful man in the community of Toronto. Is a beautiful way of celebrating his legacy within people think it is really fitting in the community. The city is very exciting and moving and very bright. With murals. I want it create a space for more ambiance and more subtle and I don't feel overwhelmed. We learned important lessons through overall creating Public Art space. We wanted to close this presentation by taking some time as part of this to acknowledge and share lessons as we hope this will allow stakeholders to project to learn from challenges. And to overcome them. First a few notes on community relations. First, community engagement is essential and especially important. In locations that do not have existing count. And to engage patrons of BIAs. Now projects requiring multiple weeks of installation. And especially social so residents and businesses know of any temporary disruptions that might allow for the process.

We also wanted to share a few general notes on general best practices. First, jobs created and signed as early as possible in the process when working with multiple organizations and basically outlined responsibility and expectations.

Accessibility, so providing as much as possible and ensuring the process and the act itself is accessible is something we strongly encourage stakeholder to take into consideration. And next to the accommodations you will be familiar with. This can include things as simple as offering different meeting options. In-person meetings, virtual calls, creating a variety of ways to answer survey questions. Making sure have you flexible schedule. And as well as for consideration itself. Making sure that art is located in a space, next to visual, audio and technology time tense. Lastly, as I'm sure you are aware, timelines change. Many aspects go into a project and Public Art initiatives often have stakeholders. Planning should consider that timeline risk being circumstances such as weather, stakeholder agreements and mitigation should be integrated from the start.

Lastly we wanted to share a few thoughts on working with artists. We find that education among best practice for collaboration with artist and especially on residential. When not regularly working with artists, having to talking about including guidelines. And understanding artist capacity. And making sure you haven't underestimated time required for an artist to complete a project. Next, artist selection.

We generally encourage working with local artists. We wanted to emphasize that businesses, especially when you're in an area that is embarking on initiatives and it is crucial as well in neighborhood improvements areas. And working with artists that are local and have a strong connection to the area and you can also look into artists that are willing

to participate in meaningful engagement activities and lastly, try to incorporate as much as possible artist capacity building as part of our Public Art initiatives and find that it is valuable to integrate mentorship and emerging artists and which is if the lead artist connected does not have connection to the area so that the project can build the skills in that neighborhood and lead to future project.

And access through the website at stepspublicart.org/inspire had-art-impact. You can see the link in the chat.

Lastly, we wanted to share a few words on some of our next steps.

And we are committed at STEPS to continue on more inclusive public spaces to research in pilot studies and we are currently finalizing two projects of significance. First, accessible art and place making initiative. And this is a project that explores the use of art and place making to improve the accessibility of public spaces. And the project will culminate in the development of a toolkit and guidelines that BIAs can use when planning and implementing Public Art initiatives, art cultural programming and make sure they are creating and fostering spaces that are accessible to all community members. And using methodology that is similar to the methodology used for art inspired impact and we have contacted existing research, consultation and with arts community experts as well as community engagement and public space analysis and we will present another coming month to pilot studies and this will be art installations that will present in the areas in Toronto. And shaping space, conducted over the past year by my colleague, Bridgette McIntop of, which resulted in the creation of a plan for the creation of cultural responsive spaces. We will be sharing in coming weeks, and you can find more information on the project on project web page which my colleague, Kruti, just posted in the chat. Thank you for your time. We would now like to open the floor to any questions and I will invite my colleagues, Madison and Anjuli to join me.

>> ANJULI SOLANKI: Thank you, Laura, for your question. So we decided not to employ. We use -- we decided not to employ foot traffic counters for the assessment and feedback with regards to the art installations. And did more engagement focused on surveying on the street. So the foot traffic that was counted was directly correlated with the survey participants that were collected. So it was a very much counting in-person on that site versus other methods.

Any other questions people may have?

>> I do. Thank you for this presentation. I'm master's student. My research is into Public Art and an explorative study conducting. I'm wondering if I can potentially set up a meeting with one of you guys and just discuss, I guess, what I'm exploring. I feel like this is, what you are discussing right now, is in alignment with whatever I'm conducting with my research.

>> Thank you.

>> ANJULI SOLANKI: Yeah, we would be happy to connect.

>> SAM MITJAVILE: Yes.

>> Awesome. Thank you so much.

>> SAM MITJAVILE: Any other questions ?

>> I have one. Thanks for the presentation. This is great. I definitely will -- I haven't read

through the whole package. It is quite long.

But I will carve out time and go through it. I wanted to ask, obviously, I know this is very, the study and your research Toronto-based and this is transferable across the country.

Can you give any kind of -- maybe this is already in there, so I apologize if I am reiterating something in the guidelines, but kind of helping to pitch this concept and these ideas and use them as guideline without getting BIAs back against the wall because it is from a Toronto lens. That can be a narrative that we get a lot that Toronto is a big city. It only works in Toronto. Toronto has the people, money, space, et cetera and it will never work here. Just wondering if there is any sort of -- or maybe this something we take off line. But if that makes any sense, kind of what I'm asking.

>> ANJULI SOLANKI: That is great question. We have worked a lot outside of Toronto. The research was in Toronto.

But something to really keep in mind is that yes we did one pilot location that was downtown and in the heavy more heavily trafficked area. The other location that we did was outside of the downtown core. The first piece of Public Art. It is in a neighborhood improvement area. So in some ways it has similar circumstances to see smaller municipalities that don't have a lot of investment in art and don't have as dense of a population.

The findings that came from that particular pilot study, which was actually the same across the two, large very similar across the two, was that you know, there was a significant positive response. And that case study in particular can be extrapolated to a location outside of Toronto and in smaller municipalities.

>> SAM MITJAVILE: I think as well, the review of literature, included literature with case studies outside of Toronto. There was one called, I have Main Street, which we included to cover activations that benefit Main Streets and local economies. For which we have done installations weirdly, municipalities of different phases.

>> MADISON KENNEDY: We would be happy to set up a meeting to discuss further if interested.

Like Sam mentioned, we have done Public Art installations that are more affordable but still quite highly impactful in cities as well as very rural spaces. So it definitely can be beneficial. And we are happy to bring to your neighborhood and your area so we are happy to continue the conversation off this call if you are interested.

>> Cool, thank you.

>> SAM MITJAVILE: Any other questions?

>> ANJULI SOLANKI: If we don't have any other questions. Or if people prefer to connect with us off line, please do.

We encourage you to take a more in-depth review of the toolkit. And also, we would love it if, after taking a look at the toolkit, this something close to our heart, and it was a really insightful process for us, ourselves to be a part of.

Thank you, everyone. We will close the meeting. And yes, again, feel free to connect with us off line.