

# Community Vitality Fellowship

2019

## Minnesota Department of Transportation

### Developing Community Collaborations to Advance Transportation Goals through Transportation for America's Artist in Residence Program

Launching in July 2019, the Community Vitality Fellow will spend a year working with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to help develop new ways of achieving agency strategic operating goals through an artist in residence program created by ArtPlace America and Transportation for America, a program of Smart Growth America. As an area of development, MnDOT is evaluating how to elevate the aesthetic, environmental, social and cultural values of a community within a transportation project. By hosting the Community Vitality Fellow, MnDOT can pilot innovative public-private partnerships and incorporate new methods of public engagement with the goal of improving project outcomes in both urban and rural settings across state of Minnesota. The Community Vitality Fellow will:

- Develop processes and procedures to further evaluate and integrate elements that elevate the unique character of each community within the transportation system.
- Bring creative problem solving skills and strategic thinking to design challenges, while providing guidance on potential improvements to how MnDOT plans, builds, operates and maintains our infrastructure using community feedback.
- Pilot innovative public engagement strategies to further build customer trust as set forth in the [MnDOT 2018-2022 Strategic Operating Plan](#) by engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including elected officials, tribal governments, community organizations and transportation partners.

### Supporting Economic and Community Development Efforts Across the State of Minnesota

- The Community Vitality Fellowship represents a cutting-edge approach to public engagement at the state DOT level.
- MnDOT supports transportation infrastructure that reflects the assets and distinct character of communities.
- Placemaking, art and enhanced green infrastructure support quality of life and economic competitiveness in communities across Minnesota.

The Fellow will be embedded at MnDOT for a 12 month period, spending the first four months in departmental rotations and shadowing to understand MnDOT's operations and strategic priorities. MnDOT hopes to answer the following questions through the fellowship position with Smart Growth America's artist in residence program:

- How do art and placemaking fit into MnDOT's vision for context sensitive solutions and the visual quality of transportation projects?
- How can project managers integrate art and creative placemaking into projects? What are the barriers?
- What internal policy and process enhancements are needed to support community requests for art and placemaking?
- How can thoughtful public engagement of historically underserved communities during project development and construction phases influence the outcome of projects?

## Workplan:

- Complete a final report with recommendations for process enhancements at MnDOT;
- Culminating the residence with (1) new project, proposal or process at MnDOT;
- A training for MnDOT project managers on strategies for working with communities requesting art, placemaking and enhanced green infrastructure on MnDOT right of way;
- A brief field scan of art and placemaking currently in MnDOT's right of way;
- An analysis of innovative public engagement tactics utilized for MnDOT projects to engage underrepresented communities in project design and planning;
- Summary of interviews with MnDOT District Engineers and rural economic development professionals around greater Minnesota on placemaking and transportation infrastructure;

## Timeline:

March 20, 2019:	Release call for artists to apply for the Fellowship position
May 1, 2019:	Application deadline
July 29, 2019:	Fellowship starts and departmental/ district rotations begin

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## DEFINITION: CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

*Creative placemaking harnesses the power of arts and culture to allow for more genuine public engagement — particularly in low-income neighborhoods, communities of color and among immigrant populations — in the development of transportation projects. Forget the traditional, staid public meeting format and instead imagine artists engaging community members using multiple languages to generate meaningful dialogues, capturing their creativity and local knowledge to better inform the ultimate design of the project. Done right, creative placemaking can lead to both a better process and a better product...The end results are streets, sidewalks and public spaces that welcome us, inspire us and move us in every sense of that word. (1)*

(1) Transportation for America. (n.d.). *The Scenic Route: Getting Started with Creative Placemaking and Transportation*