

PLACEMAKING PROJECT

Souly Austin supports the vision of a Merchants Association by providing seed funding for a placemaking project. Placemaking is the process in which community input guides the development of quality public spaces and projects. Placemaking facilitates creativity in a community and focuses on the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

Project Goals Include:

- Foster a sense of community by bringing together and empowering stakeholders
- Highlight unique community characteristics and assets
- Allows the community to lead positive change and build strong relationships
- Enhancing community relationships and the sense of place through the execution of innovative projects
- Help further a district’s vision and a merchants association’s mission



Project Description

The first Souly Austin District Placemaking Project was executed in the Red River Cultural District in 2017 in partnership with the Red River Merchants Association and Public City, along with additional partners. After gathering for 1+ years to discuss the district’s future and their vision, the RRCD Merchants Association selected an exhibition with a series of three murals as their placemaking project with the intent of achieving two of their goals: showcasing the District’s cultural history and beautifying the area. A maintenance agreement was set in place between the City of Austin Economic Development Department and the Red River Merchants Association to ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of the murals. The estimated project included matching funding from the Red River Merchants Association, as well as leveraging \$7,500 of private investment

Partners:

- Public City (Placemaking Consultant, Execution Coordination)



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- Wyatt Brand (Public Relations and Promotion)
- Tim Kerr (Artist)
- Michael Corcoran (Historian)
- Matthew Briar Bonifacio (Artist)
- Public Works Department (Implementation Partner)
- Austin Transportation Department (Implementation Partner)
- Austin Police Department (Implementation Partner)
- ATXN (Implementation Partner)
- Stubb's BBQ
- Cheer Up Charlies
- Elysium
- Red River Cultural District businesses and property owners

District Strategy Alignment:

- Music, Culture, and Arts, Strategy 2.3: Support public art and installations by local artists that further distinguish the identity of the District.

Challenges:

- Lack of City developed parameters and processes around project feasibility
- Clear procurement standards and clarity of project requirements
- City permitting process lengthy and complex
- Approvals from private property owners
- Concerns over equity of projects installed on private property
- Long-term maintenance strategies
- Project funding structure presents challenges to final product ownership

Successes:

- Partnering with multiple City departments is key to the successful execution of these projects.
- The possibility of these projects sparks interest in merchants to contribute financially or with in-kind.
- Involvement and leadership of merchants and district leaders led to the successful implementation of these projects. These were the first projects executed by the Red River Merchants Association, resulting in sharing the mission of the District with the public.
- Provided an opportunity to increase district identity and district brand awareness.



Metrics

District Beautification, Identity and Connectedness:

- Improve design aesthetics of the District
- Establish and reinforce the Cultural District identity
- Establish the perception of a clean environment

District Promotions:

- Social Media Posts

Culture and Arts:

- Showcasing the History of the District