

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 iconic South Congress District is known for its unique shops, services, experiences, and, of course, its art. In an effort to continue to promote South Congress to both visitors and locals, the South Congress Merchants Association determined that a creative installation would be the best value. The Board of Directors determined the project direction and selected the artists, empowering them to lead this initiative. The Merchants Association entered into a maintenance agreement with the City of Austin to ensure long-term stewardship of the installation. The installation contributed to the eclectic array of murals and store fronts that define the South Congress District. The installation was highlighted in to a promotional video featuring the District businesses.



Partners:

- South Congress Preservation and Improvement District (Implementation Partner)
- Public City (Placemaking Consultant, Execution Coordination)
- Rory Skagen (Artist)
- Gary Green (Artist)
- Blue Genie (Artist)

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- South Congress Business District businesses and property owners
- Hudson Meats
- Austin Transportation Department (Implementation Partner)

District Strategy Alignment:

- Beautification and Aesthetics, Strategy 1.2: Activate blank walls or vacant lots to beautify the physical experience.

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:

- Robust participation from District leaders led to the implementation of a project that they were invested in and met their expectations.
- Project provided exposure to the association and highlighted the association's priorities and vision.
- Significant media exposure that consequently attracted visitors to the creative installation site.
- The project reinforced South Congress' artistic and creative character, enhancing the visitor experience and exposure to legacy businesses.
- Provided an opportunity to increase district identity and district brand awareness.

Metrics
<p>District Beautification, Identity and Connectedness:</p> <p>Improve design aesthetics of the District</p> <p>Establish and reinforce the District identity</p> <p>Establish the perception of a clean environment</p>
<p>District Promotions:</p> <p>Social Media Posts</p>
<p>Culture and Arts:</p> <p>Showcasing the History of the District</p>
<p>Anchor to southern boundary of the district</p>