



Artistry is the new name for Bloomington Theatre and Art Center, which rebranded on July 1, 2015. Artistry is an independent, nonprofit organization based in the city-owned venue called the Bloomington Center for the Arts. The Bloomington Center for the Arts is home to seven nonprofit arts organizations and also presents outside acts. Artistry's programming comprises theater productions, visual arts exhibitions, arts education at the Center for the Arts and other locations throughout the Twin Cities, and creative placemaking. The following program/organization names are no longer active and should not be used in reference to our programming: Bloomington Art Center, Bloomington Civic Theatre, Bloomington Theatre and Art Center.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Artistry and City of Bloomington Announce Next Phase of Our Public-Private Partnership to Advance *Creative Placemaking in the South Loop*

(Bloomington, MN) *Creative Placemaking in the South Loop* – a public-private partnership launched in 2014 to engage artists, designers, and other creative people as leaders in community-building – will continue and grow under a plan adopted by the Artistry Board of Directors and Bloomington City Council in late July. The “Plan for Creative Placemaking in the South Loop” reflects the partners’ vision to establish the South Loop as a distinctive destination known for welcoming creative people and using the arts to transform the neighborhood physically, socially, and culturally.

The Plan is one of several outcomes funded by a 2013 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) “Our Town” grant. Artistry, the City, and numerous partners matched the \$100,000 award and used it to develop the Plan and commission a series of creative placemaking demonstration projects in 2014-2015. The City will allocate \$400,000 per year for the next two to four years to build on the momentum generated by this year’s projects and work toward six goals: (1) ensuring urban design excellence in transforming the built environment; (2) animating public spaces and strengthening the social and cultural fabric; (3) involving and empowering people who inhabit and care about the South Loop; (4) elevating and projecting South Loop's identity; (5) building capacity to sustain placemaking leadership and champions; and (6) establishing a resident creative sector.

The \$400,000 annual budget, which comes from the City’s South Loop Development Fund, will pay for staff, consultant expertise and artist commissions during the two to four year “momentum phase” anticipated by the City and Artistry. The next steps for the City and Artistry are to hire a Creative Placemaking Director and establish a nine-member Creative Placemaking Commission with members appointed by the City Council and the Artistry Board of Directors.

The Creative Placemaking Director will have primary responsibility for community relations in the South Loop, including raising awareness of the neighborhood’s identity inside and outside its boundaries, connecting the neighborhood’s diverse stakeholders, and engaging the stakeholders in the district’s development.

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The Director will also research and pursue private funding sources to supplement public funds available for placemaking and work with Artistry, the Commission, and South Loop stakeholders to sustain creative placemaking beyond the momentum phase in the South Loop, ultimately extending placemaking to other Bloomington neighborhoods.

The City will contract with Artistry for services to develop and implement permanent and temporary creative placemaking projects, including identifying potential sites and projects, finding and selecting artists, designers, architects and other creative people for project commissions, supporting artists through permitting and other regulatory processes, and facilitating the relationships between artists and project hosts.

According to NEA Director of Design Programs Jason Schupbach, Bloomington's approach to integrating creative placemaking into its civic life may be a first. "I know of no other municipal government that has established a Creative Placemaking Commission or hired a director of placemaking," Schupbach said. "The City and Artistry have been successful in leveraging past NEA grant funds and can take pride in the outcomes they have achieved over the last two years."

Artistry Executive Director Andrea Specht cited the long history of partnership between Artistry and the City as a key factor contributing to the early success of *Creative Placemaking in the South Loop*. "We've worked closely with the City for more than a decade to ensure access to high quality arts experiences at the Bloomington Center for the Arts. The creative placemaking work has allowed us to deepen our partnership for the benefit of audiences and artists region-wide."

The South Loop is a rapidly-developing 2,300-acre neighborhood adjacent to the MSP International Airport and the Minnesota River that is home to the Mall of America, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and four light rail transit stations. By 2020, on a typical day the South Loop will have 6,000 residents, 9,000 hotel guests, 35,000 employees, and 115,000 Mall of America visitors. For more information, visit www.bloomingtonmn.gov/development-districts/south-loop-district.

Creative Placemaking is an emerging field that works to build vibrant, distinctive, and sustainable communities and economies by engaging artists, designers, architects, and other creative people and organizations.

Artistry is a regional arts nonprofit serving more than 70,000 people annually through theater, visual arts, arts education, and creative placemaking programs. Artistry is one of seven nonprofit organizations based in the Bloomington Center for the Arts. For more information, visit www.artistrymn.org.

The City of Bloomington is a community that people seek out as a place to live, conduct business and recreate. The City has achieved this reputation by creating safe, welcoming neighborhoods and by collaborating with our neighbors to promote the fun, creativity and vitality of community life.