

Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light

Bloomberg
Philanthropies

PUBLIC ART
CHALLENGE

Summary of Findings

Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light was a temporary public art project in Spartanburg, SC on view from October 4 to April 25, 2017. It featured 9 art installations by light and media artist Erwin Redl representing 10 city neighborhoods. *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* aimed to develop and enhance relationships between the arts community, the Spartanburg Police Department and local residents. It was a partnership among the City of Spartanburg Police and Community Relations Departments, artist Erwin Redl, the Chapman Cultural Center and neighborhood associations in the city of Spartanburg.



Key Statistics



2.5 million views

of 9 installations on display across 10 neighborhoods over 157 days

\$1.7 million

catalyzed for the local economy, including:

- \$1 million Bloomberg Philanthropies' Public Art Challenge grant
- \$63,500 local project funding
- \$480,000 in-kind contributions
- \$148,500 investments for new initiatives created as a result of the projects, including:
 - \$126,000 for arts initiatives
 - \$22,500 for future work related to crime prevention and workforce development

83 partners

implemented the project, including businesses, nonprofits, government agencies and community organizations, encompassing:

- 13 city agencies
- 16 public-private collaborations activated on behalf of the projects

77 people employed

to help create and support *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light*

980 volunteers

contributed their time and talent

63 programs

and activities were held in connection with *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light*

45 articles

appeared in local and national print and online press

10% of city residents

attended the opening event

117 local artists

and makers engaged throughout the development of the project

122 police officers

engaged in the project

1 video created for the art installation

now used as a training tool by the Spartanburg Police Department

50 poems

written by residents for the installations



Local Arts & Culture

Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light supported the local arts community and created opportunities for future art projects.

***Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* encouraged interest in existing arts and culture offerings.**

- One-third of visitors said that they planned to visit another cultural attraction that day.

The project expanded community members' knowledge of public art and appetite for future projects.

- 89% of residents surveyed had never participated in a public art project, with some never hearing the term public art before.
- 9 arts and government leaders interviewed said that they would like to continue to host public art in the city.

***Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* helped advance the work of local artists.**

- 117 local artists and makers were engaged throughout the project in site development, fabrication and installation.

The project led to the creation of new initiatives.

- 2 arts initiatives were created as a direct result of *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light*, including:
 - The ArtsXcelerator Challenge, a new \$10,000 grant annual grant opportunity for artists.
 - “Lighten Up Spartanburg,” a public art exhibit by the Spartanburg Art Museum.

Civic Issues and Awareness



Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light advanced progress on critical civic issues.

The project promoted a positive shift in facets of police-community relations.

- 122 police officers were retrained using a video installation featuring residents talking about their experiences living in a traditionally high-crime neighborhood. The video has become part of the Spartanburg Police Department training program for all existing and future officers and administrative staff.
- Police officers have indicated that they had been receiving more notes and comments of appreciation than before the project.

“No matter what side of the tracks you’re on, your socio-economic status - we’re all at the one table, one voice, working on a public art project. It caused us to talk, start building relationships [and] bridge gaps.”

**Spartanburg Police Chief
Alonzo Thompson**



Community and Identity

Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light promoted a sense of community, civic leadership and pride.

Residents embraced opportunities to engage in the project either by participating in planning or celebrating its opening.

- 10 neighborhood associations collaborated with *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light*.
- One-third of the city's population attended the launch of *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* on October 4, 2016.

Planning meetings created opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to interact.

- 35 planning meetings hosted before the project opened to the public brought residents from different neighborhoods together with government officials, police officers, arts leaders and project team members.
- Social capital was created through these meetings over time among groups with historically difficult relations, evidenced by the development of positive relationships (i.e. recipe swapping, hugging and ongoing conversations).

Cross-sector arts advocates emerged as a result of the project.

- Spartanburg Police Chief Alonzo Thompson advocated for the power of public art at a hearing convened by the House Judiciary Committee on the challenges facing local law enforcement.
- The Mary Black Foundation, a foundation devoted to healthcare in Spartanburg, supported arts for the first time by funding *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light's* evaluation efforts.

The project elevated community voices and increased civic engagement among participating neighborhood associations.

- The Highland Neighborhood Association emerged as a particular leader in its community, successfully advocating for single-family housing when presented with a city proposal to establish multiple-family housing in the neighborhood.



Collaboration and Partnerships

Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light encouraged collaboration and the development of new relationships.

Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light enhanced or created many working relationships.

- 78% of interviewees reported working with an individual or group that they had never worked with before.
- 62% of interviewees indicated that they now had connections that would benefit themselves and the community, and that they had a better sense of “who is around and what they do.”

“When you have an art process that brings people together, that breaks down traditional barriers, you can solve any issue.”

Project manager
Jennifer Evins