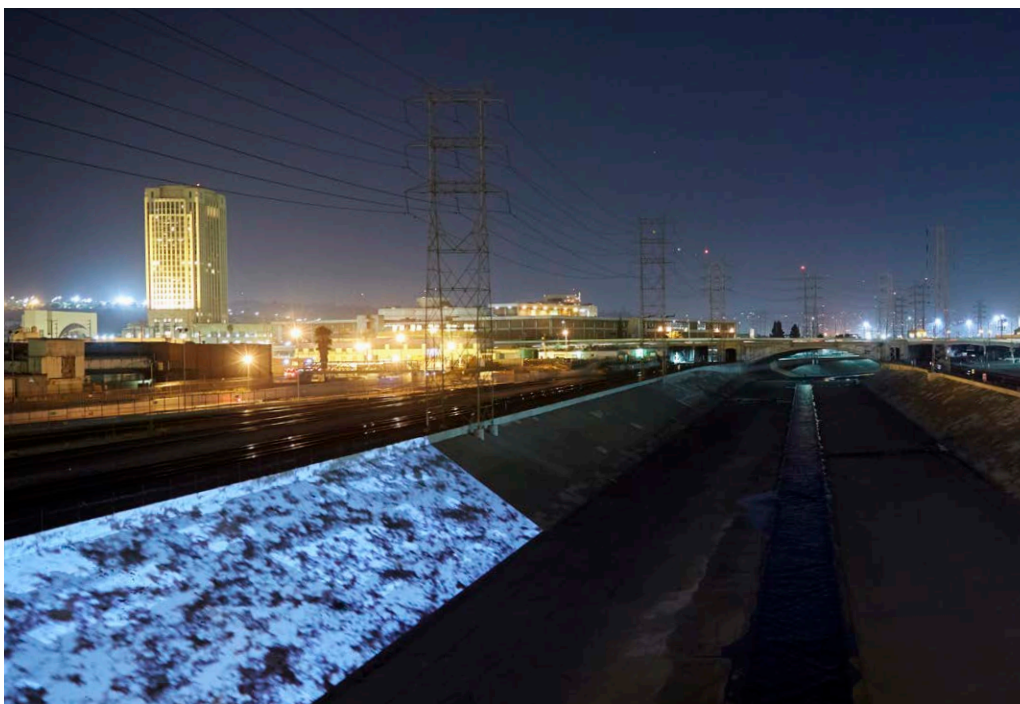
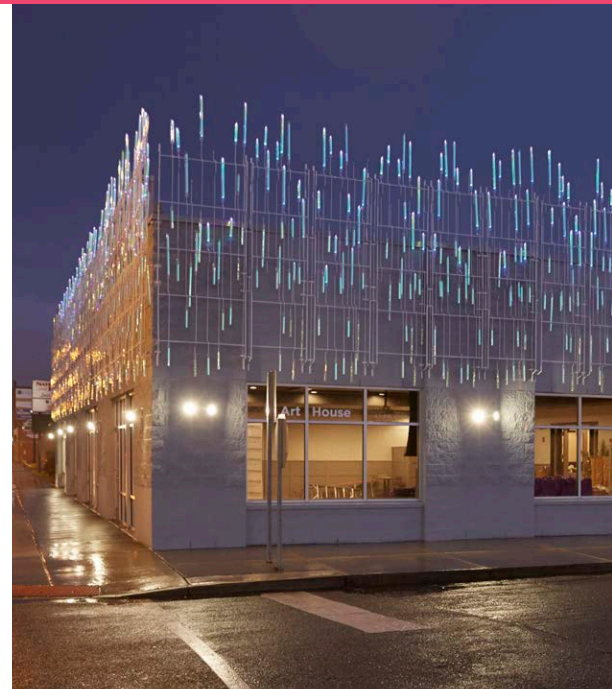


The Inaugural Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge

Bloomberg
Philanthropies

PUBLIC ART
CHALLENGE

Summary of Findings





Background and Overview

About Bloomberg Philanthropies' Public Art Challenge

Bloomberg Philanthropies' Public Art Challenge (PARC) funded four U.S. cities with \$1 million each to mount innovative temporary public art installations. Each project would focus on raising awareness of a social issue relevant to that community. CEO of Bloomberg Philanthropies Patti Harris explained the foundation's vision for the PARC:

"Mike Bloomberg has always believed strongly in the major impact the arts can have. As Mayor of New York, he saw that while, of course, public art celebrates creativity, ... it also offers great economic and social benefits, helping to revitalize neighborhoods, spur economic development [and] attract visitors. And most importantly ... it brings communities together and has the ability to foster cooperation across city departments ... and with the private sector."

Cities with 30,000 residents or more were eligible to apply for the PARC, and mayors or chief executives submitted applications on behalf of a collaboration between the city and the artist(s). The winning cities Los Angeles, California; the Capital Region of New York (Albany, Schenectady and Troy); Spartanburg, South Carolina; and Gary, Indiana were announced in June 2015. The grant gave cities 24 months (January 2016–December 2017) to execute their projects. Each project was executed by a team consisting of the artist(s) and staff from local government and nonprofit organizations.



Winners

Four Winners of the Inaugural Public Art Challenge

CURRENT:LA Water

CURRENT:LA Water, which ran in Los Angeles, California from July 16 to August 14, 2016, focused on increasing awareness about water conservation, ecology and drought. The citywide event consisted of 15 multidisciplinary works of temporary outdoor art by 13 commissioned artists, creative programming and other events that were free and open to the public.

Breathing Lights

Three cities that comprise New York's Greater Capital Region (Albany, Schenectady and Troy) joined together to bring attention to the issues of vacancy and blight in their communities. Running from September 30 to November 30, 2016, the *Breathing Lights* public art project highlighted those issues through installations of pulsing lights in abandoned houses owned by the three cities and local land banks.

Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light

Spartanburg, South Carolina used its grant to execute *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light (SSNL)*, as part of its ongoing efforts to improve community-police relations and reduce crime. The project brought nine light-based installations to 10 neighborhoods throughout the city from October 4, 2016, to April 25, 2017.

ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen

Gary, Indiana used its grant to mount public art installations at *ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen*, a permanent site designed to use the visual and culinary arts to spur local entrepreneurship, promote social and cultural engagement and prompt economic revitalization. The ArtHouse building, which opened in November 2016, incorporates public art in and around the commercial site.

Numbers and Statistics



10,049,897 views
across six U.S. cities

\$13.2 million

catalyst for local economies, including:

- \$4 million - Bloomberg Philanthropies' Public Art Challenge grants
- \$2.58 million - local project funding
- \$893,000 - in-kind contributions
- \$5.7 million - investments for new initiatives created as a result of the projects, including:
 - \$1.82 million for arts initiatives
 - \$3.9 million for future work related to civic issues

246 partners

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

- 48 city agencies
- 51 public-private collaborations, including multiple businesses, nonprofits and local governments

818 people employed
across the four projects through full-time and part-time positions

1,297 volunteers

contributed their time and talent to PArC projects

487 programs

and activities hosted, including tours, workshops and lectures

313 neighborhoods

as defined by ZIP codes, were represented by visitors to the art

327 articles

appeared in local and national print and online press



Citizen Engagement

The PArC projects mobilized and engaged local residents.

Residents and city officials offered feedback during the development and implementation phases of the public art projects and related events.

- All 15 of the city's council districts were engaged while planning *CURRENT:LA Water* and the team incorporated feedback from city council members and other officials on behalf of residents.
- *Breathing Lights* team leaders held Think Tank meetings in each of the three cities to share information with neighborhood residents and solicit their input during the planning phase of the project.
- *ArtHouse's* project team hosted an open forum to discuss the project with residents during its initial stages.
- 10 neighborhood associations partnered closely with the *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* team to create the individual installations.

The projects relied on, developed and empowered community leaders.

- 12 neighborhood ambassadors participated in planning for and promoting *Breathing Lights* and consistently liaised with residents, presented at events and conducted tours. Some ambassadors already held leadership positions in their communities, but this opportunity was a new experience for others.
- By partnering with neighborhood associations, the Spartanburg project elevated community voices and increased civic engagement in these areas, with the Highland Neighborhood Association emerging as a particular leader in its community.

A subset of residents repeatedly visited the PArC installations or participated in programming, suggesting that the projects cultivated a highly engaged audience.

- 40 percent of respondents across all four PArC projects said that they visited the site or attended an event 2 to 4 times; 22 percent reported 5 or more visits. The large proportion of repeat viewers reinforced that residents found the projects to be engaging and worthwhile.
- 41,159 people attended 487 programs and activities hosted in connection to the projects, with some events, such as Spartanburg’s opening, drawing 10 percent of the city’s population.



The PArC projects engaged local youth through creative-focused initiatives.

- Children from LiveArts Studio, a local arts program in Gary, helped assemble the 1,000 solar-powered lanterns on *ArtHouse’s* façade.
- The *Breathing Lights* team partnered with local nonprofit organizations to sponsor youth media projects in which local youth recorded radio and video segments about vacancy.
- Spartanburg youth received instruction on filmmaking as part of one *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* installation.



Civic Issues and Awareness



The PArC projects advanced awareness of and progress on critical civic issues.

To varying degrees, the PArC projects affected residents' perceptions about the projects' focal issues.

- According to the local evaluation report, 68 percent of attendees surveyed at a blight and vacancy roundtable said that *Breathing Lights* elevated the issue of urban blight throughout the Capital Region. As stated by a stakeholder, "There are many people who are now conversing about the very basic issues around the blight. Previously, people were not aware. Now we have vocabulary for it and resources. This is rather astounding."
- 61 percent of visitors surveyed reported that *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* changed their thinking about crime and safety in Spartanburg.
- 96 percent of visitor survey respondents reported that they believe *ArtHouse's* Culinary Business Incubator, which has trained 33 local restaurant entrepreneurs as of the publishing of this report, will help stimulate economic development in Gary.
- 34 percent of Los Angeles respondents reported that *CURRENT:LA Water* changed their perception of the city's water infrastructure, and 26 percent said that the art changed how they think about their own use of water.

"There are many people who are now conversing about the very basic issues around the blight... This is rather astounding."

Project stakeholder

The PARC projects helped generate government action on pressing civic issues.

- 60 local officials, housing advocates and businesspeople in the Capital Region drafted policy recommendations for addressing local blight and vacancy at a policy roundtable, “Combatting Urban Blight in the Cities of Albany, Schenectady & Troy” in April 2017.
- 122 Spartanburg police officers viewed a video installation featuring residents talking about their experiences living in a traditionally high-crime neighborhood. The video is now part of the Spartanburg Police Department training program for all existing and new officers and administrative staff.
- Inspired by *ArtHouse*, the City of Gary hosted the “Gary Preservation Tour,” a series of free public tours of architecturally significant buildings in downtown Gary in the summer of 2017. The tours helped raise awareness and spark discussion about possible reuse and redevelopment in downtown Gary.





Collaboration and Partnership

The PArC promoted collaboration across the public and private sectors.

The projects helped generate new partnerships and fostered new relationships between existing government, nonprofit and corporate partners.

- 246 partners helped implement the four projects, including 51 public-private collaborations, some formed specifically for the PArC. Prominent examples are neighborhood associations with the Police Department and the lead arts organization in Spartanburg; the Place Lab with the City of Gary; the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) with River LA in Los Angeles; and Albany, Schenectady and Troy's mayor's offices and land banks with various nonprofits in the Capital Region.
- *CURRENT:LA Water* created an opportunity for DCA to successfully partner with nine other city agencies and departments. A DCA staff person commented, "I think that's the crux of what Bloomberg Philanthropies [Public Art] Challenge grant is asking—for governments to rethink how they do business, to rethink their methodologies. ... [T]hat has happened for us."
- According to the local evaluation report, 62 percent of Spartanburg 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."
- *ArtHouse* is the product of novel partnerships between city government and nongovernmental organizations and marks the first time that the city government has collaborated with artists. The project is also facilitating new partnerships and helping develop ongoing relationships and collaborations that extend beyond *ArtHouse*.
- For the first time, the city governments in Albany, Schenectady and Troy worked together to tackle the issues of blight and vacancy from a regional perspective. Through *Breathing Lights*, the three cities were able to maximize their knowledge and leverage municipal resources from various partner organizations more effectively than ever before.

In the course of developing the PARC projects, the teams identified and built upon local corporate and nonprofit resources.

- In the Capital Region, the *Breathing Lights* team worked with the Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy and Albany Battery to construct the lighting installation for window frames.
- In Los Angeles, the project team was able to attract attention and publicize events by advertising on displays in LAX, the second busiest airport in the country.
- Spartanburg team members partnered with Hubbell Lighting and Duke Energy, two nearby industrial lighting and energy companies, to fabricate installations.
- In Gary, the *ArtHouse* team partnered with FoodHe.ro, a Chicago-based business that provides culinary operations support and training, to develop the Culinary Business Incubator.

“I think that’s the crux of what Bloomberg Philanthropies [Public Art] Challenge grant is asking – for governments to rethink how they do business.”

Project Manager





Civic Pride and Exploration

The PArC projects enhanced people's connections to their city and fostered civic pride.

The projects promoted exploration and connection to different neighborhoods within a city.

- 74 percent of visitor survey respondents across the four projects reported that the PArC event or installation made them feel a greater sense of connection to the neighborhood where they experienced it.
- 64 percent reported that the public art or related programming changed their opinion of the neighborhood for the better.
- In visitor interviews conducted by the local evaluator, a top theme that emerged was that *CURRENT:LA Water's* layout across 14 parks and two bridges gave people a unique opportunity to explore new places in Los Angeles and prompted Angelinos to think about the city in a broader context than their immediate neighborhoods. As one visitor remarked, "The neat thing about public art is it's a scavenger hunt: You end up seeing untraveled corners of the city you never knew existed."
- In Spartanburg, several project team members said that there is an increased sense of "connectivity" across communities because of *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light*. The project fostered cross-neighborhood relationship building because it showed residents that regardless of where they live in the city.

"Everyone wants the very best for their neighborhood and Spartanburg in general."

Government Official



The PARC projects promoted relationship building and helped bridge divides.

- To date, *ArtHouse* visitors have come from 138 neighborhoods, including all 8 neighborhoods in Gary, and the project has helped change perceptions of Gary. One program participant at *ArtHouse* said, “As an outsider, *ArtHouse* has changed my perspective of Gary. I know who Gary is because of *ArtHouse*. As I come here and meet people, I feel like I’m back in a vibrant place.”
- Through 35 planning meetings that brought residents from different neighborhoods together with government officials and police officers, *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* helped establish common ground. As stated by a project stakeholder, these groups are “starting to see each other in different ways” and realizing that they are all invested in improving the city’s neighborhoods.

- According to the local evaluation report, *Breathing Lights* provided opportunities for residents from neighborhoods with installations and nearby suburbs to interact and discuss pressing issues. As stated by a community leader, “This felt like an opportunity to just be heard and hear others and that’s really the only way to break down barriers... It was a great vehicle to get people from outside our neighborhood in [and] get people from different neighborhoods to discover each other...”

“The neat thing about public art is it’s a scavenger hunt: You end up seeing untraveled corners of the city you never knew existed.”

Visitor

In some instances, the PArC projects enhanced people's opinions of and trust in local government.

- 62 percent of respondents reported that *ArtHouse* changed their opinion of local government for the better. *ArtHouse* went against the ingrained local narrative of disappointment around undertakings in Gary. Said one resident, "This was the first example of what could be, because it was actually something that was dreamed and came to fruition. It's the first complete project of everything people have been talking about over the years."
- In Spartanburg, the project promoted a positive shift in facets of police-community relations. According to the local evaluation report, police officers anecdotally reported better relations with residents as they have received more notes of appreciation and phone calls about issues that would previously have gone unreported.

"This was the first example of what could be, because it was actually something that was dreamed and came to fruition."

Resident





The PArC projects encouraged feelings of community pride.

- The local evaluator of *CURRENT:LA Water* reported that the project promoted civic pride and identity among visitors. As stated by one visitor, "We love Los Angeles, we ARE Los Angeles!"
- In the Capital Region, 85 percent of visitor survey respondents said that the art was positive for their city and the region, and 81 percent said it was positive for the neighborhood. The local evaluator's interviews with residents support the data. One resident noted: "These were the ugliest structures during the day and then clearly the most beautiful structures at night...There was pride about what these houses can be."
- 99 percent of Gary residents and visitors to *ArtHouse* surveyed said that they believed the project is positive for the city and the region. As stated by one resident, "What I've seen is an atmosphere shift. You know how you go down two city blocks and all the houses are abandoned except for yours? So, you wake up feeling gloomy, you go to bed feeling gloomy... Now, they say, 'If we can have an *ArtHouse*, then we can have some other stuff.'"

"These were the ugliest structures during the day and then clearly the most beautiful structures at night... There was pride about what these houses can be."

Resident

Knowledge and Appreciation



The PArC projects expanded residents' and stakeholders' knowledge and appreciation of public art.

Before the PArC, knowledge and experiences of public art varied across the cities.

- 89 percent of residents at *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* planning meetings reported that they had never before participated in a public art project. Before *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light*, local residents perceived public art as static, taking the form of “a bronze feature, waterscape, or something.”
- *Breathing Lights* was the largest public art project ever undertaken in the Capital Region. As such, residents had limited experience with a project of this scale. Still, in interviews conducted before *Breathing Lights*, among the top 10 words residents used when describing how they felt about the project was good, love and cool.
- 88 percent of Gary residents surveyed before *ArtHouse* opened said that they thought public art is meaningful, and 88 percent reported that having access to art and cultural events in their community is very or somewhat valuable. These data imply that Gary's residents were positively predisposed to the concept of public art.



The PARC projects expanded stakeholders’ understanding of how public art can impact communities.

- A theme that emerged from *Breathing Lights* stakeholder interviews was that the project encouraged a new understanding of how public art can engage populations. As one interviewee commented, the public art “engaged people, encouraged them to seek out and look for more. We’ve not had public art like that here before. I think it engaged the community in a different way.” The local evaluator’s survey data affirms this idea, as 64 percent of residents surveyed said that *Breathing Lights* stimulated greater community engagement.
- *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* provided evidence to stakeholders about how, as reported by one project team member, successful art endeavors are “leading to a reimagining of the city.” A high-level official in city government elaborated on this notion: “Public art brings a higher quality of life to communities. Public art and public safety should be in the same realm.”
- A member of the Gary project team explained, “people see [public art] as a way to improve the appearance of the community, get community involved in the city, take a larger stake in the future of the city, engage more kids.”

“We’ve not had public art like that here before. I think it engaged the community in a different way.”

Project stakeholder

The PARC increased enthusiasm for public art among residents and stakeholders.

- 89 percent of project stakeholders said that they or their city should participate in a public art project like the PARC again.
- 74 percent of residents surveyed said that they want to see more public art in their communities.
- Each city has undertaken new initiatives to either host or promote public art in their cities, such as murals in Gary, a citywide public art plan in Troy, a new grant program for artists to create public art in Spartanburg and a future public art biennial in Los Angeles.

“People see [public art] as a way to improve the appearance of the community, get community involved in the city, take a larger stake in the future of the city, engage more kids.”

Government official





Local Arts and Future Projects

The projects enhanced the capacity of local arts stakeholders to embark on future initiatives.

The projects expanded the influence of arts stakeholders and identified new arts advocates.

- During *CURRENT:LA Water*, the Department of Cultural Affairs was the focus of municipal operations—for the first time, the agency and public art took center stage. There is indication that the partnerships established between various city agencies will continue in the future. Since the public art biennial, DCA staff have been invited to join more meetings with other city agencies than they have been previously.
- Spartanburg’s Police Chief emerged as an arts advocate, and in May 2017 he testified at a U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee Hearing on law enforcement challenges. In his remarks, he cited *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light* as a positive example of efforts to improve police-community relations: “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.”
- 11 arts leaders across the three cities were brought together to advise on the development and implementation of *Breathing Lights*, promoting regional collaboration on arts initiatives.
- Capacity for future arts initiatives has been expanded in Gary, as *ArtHouse* marks the first time that city government has collaborated with artists, and the City has developed new procedures and models for partnering closely with arts organizations through the process of planning for and managing this project.

The PArC projects helped participating cities gain visibility, and they now serve as examples for other cities that are interested in hosting similar projects.

- Eight cities from around the country and world have inquired whether they could host a traveling exhibition of *Breathing Lights*. In October 2017, the Land Bank in Newburgh, NY created a pilot Artist-in-Vacancy program inspired by *Breathing Lights* that offers vacant properties in their struggling downtown corridor as sites for artists to develop creative work that will engage the community.
- *CURRENT:LA Water* and *Breathing Lights* were both recognized by the Americans for the Arts in 2016 through the Public Art Network Year in Review program, the only national program that specifically recognizes the most compelling public art.

“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.”

Spartanburg Police Chief Alonzo Thompson as the attribution





Economic Impact and Support

The PArC grants generated funding and in-kind support for the public art projects and future initiatives.

The projects generated significant funding, in-kind support and donations.

- In addition to the PArC grants, the projects were supported by \$2,579,000 in other funding and \$892,663 in in-kind resources.
- 818 employees and 1,297 volunteers assisted with various facets of the four projects, from fabricating and installing artworks to giving guided tours to leading fitness events.

The projects prompted new activities and funding related to blight in the New York Capital Region, crime prevention in Spartanburg and economic development and workforce training in Gary.

- \$3,879,421 has been dedicated by local and state governments and nonprofit organizations to address blight and vacancy in the Capital Region since the PArC grant was awarded. In addition, since *Breathing Lights'* opening night, 30 of the 166 buildings consistently lit during the *Breathing Lights* exhibit have been sold to date.
- \$22,500 has been generated for crime prevention initiatives in the city as a result of *Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light*.
- Community initiatives and other redevelopment projects have emerged since *ArtHouse* opened. Americorps VISTA volunteers are leading city preservation tours to highlight older buildings in need of repair. Funding has been committed to repair a local fire station. Also, demolition of the property across the street from *ArtHouse* will make way for future development opportunities.



The success of the PArC projects prompted other local arts initiatives, supported with \$1,820,833 from private and public funders.

- Los Angeles is planning at least two more public art biennials, which will focus on other issues. It has earmarked approximately \$1.3 million for the next *CURRENT:LA*.
- The New York State Council on the Arts awarded \$49,500 to the Arts Center of the Capital Region to complete a public art plan for Troy. In the future, similar plans may be developed for Albany and Schenectady.
- Spartanburg's ArtsXcelerator Challenge is a new grant program of \$10,000 awarded annually to a creative project whose goal is to make the city more inclusive, proud and culturally vibrant.
- In Gary, \$295,833 has been allocated for several new arts initiatives currently under way, including a mural of the Jackson 5 on a downtown Gary building. Another example is the City Church Ruins Garden project, funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which will be the country's largest transformation of a crumbling building into a public park able to host outdoor plays, weddings and other live events.



The projects generated moderate spending at local businesses.

- Visitors, both local and nonlocal, engaged in various activities related to the PArC projects, including dining at local restaurants (57 percent of survey respondents) and visiting other retail establishments (15 percent).
- 48 percent of visitors spent less than \$25 on activities associated with their visit to the PArC event or site, such as parking, going to a restaurant and patronizing other businesses. 27 percent of visitors spent between \$25 and \$50, and 24 percent spent more than \$50.



Press and Social Media

The PArC generated national and international media attention and had a significant presence on social media and project websites.

Through the PArC, cities generated press on a national and international level.

- Across the grantees, the projects were covered in 327 articles that appeared in local, national and international media sources. Most notably,
 - The New York Times featured a lengthy article on *Breathing Lights* on November 25, 2017, which included large photographs of the lit buildings, and WHMT created a documentary about the effort that aired on the public broadcasting network.
 - *ArtHouse* is helping to change the regional and national narrative around Gary. 51 articles have been published since the project launched, such as the Washington Post's "Can \$1 million from Bloomberg help the former 'murder capital' become an artsy dining destination?"
 - On June 23, 2015, the Washington Post covered the PArC, highlighting its goals of stimulating "economic development in struggling areas," creating partnerships and raising the profile of important social issues.

The grantees engaged with many people through the projects' social media accounts and websites.

- In total, the projects registered 41,934 social media engagements,¹ and the project websites generated 243,585 page views.
- Illustrative comments on the grantees' social media pages include these: "i really like the art. i walk at the park a couple times a week. thank you" (*CURRENT:LA Water*); "thank you for the great video and for illuminating the vacancy problem" (*Breathing Lights*); "love the idea of community working with artists and police from the beginning" (*Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light*); and "i love that kitchen beautiful" (*ArtHouse*).

1. Instagram likes and comments; Facebook likes, comments and shares; and Twitter likes and retweets.



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