

**Niagara River Greenway Commission
Consultation and Review Form**

Date of Submittal:

9/16/2024

Project Registration Number (*office use only*):

Type of Review Required (please check one):

- Mandatory Consultation for proposals seeking Greenway Funding
 Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement for proposals not seeking Greenway Funding

PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Name: | The Collaborative Center for Social Innovation, Inc. |
| Mailing Address: | 35 Tranquility Trail |
| State: | NY |
| Zip Code: | 14086 |
| Federal ID#: | 88-3126824 |
| Charities Registration #: | 49-29-06 |

PROJECT TYPE (Please check only ONE)

- Trail Development / Improvement Interpretation / Cultural Monuments
 Ecosystem / Riparian Habitat Restoration Stewardship
 Niagara River Greenway Placemaking / Public Access / Wayfinding

FUNDING COMMITTEE

- Host Community Standing Committee Ecological Standing Committee
 Buffalo and Erie County Standing Committee State Parks Standing Committee
 Unsure at this time / N/A

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED**\$ 706,408 (all phases, 5 years)****ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES**

| Source | Amount |
|--|-----------|
| Collaborative Center for Social Innovation Summer Program Funds | \$99,000 |
| Get Fokus'd Productions - in kind | \$5,000 |
| Emerging Artists Support - Hunt Art Gallery Partnership (Grants & Fundraising) | \$154,000 |

PROJECT INFORMATION

| | |
|--|--|
| Project Name: | Our Place, Our Purpose: Public Art Project |
| Location (include GPS coordinates if possible): | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shoreline Trail access point at Black Rock Canal Park/Black Rock Harbor Road, Buffalo (Coordinates 42.945071, -78.908741) 2. Shoreline Trail wall on Aqua Lane, Tonawanda (Coordinates 42.961685, -78.920056) 3. Shoreline Trail Pedestrian Bridge over Beaver Island Parkway, Grand Island (Coordinates 42.995795, -78.954631) |
| Project Site Address: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buffalo 2. Tonawanda 3. Grand Island |
| State: | NY |
| Zip Code: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 14207 2. 14150 3. 14072 |
| Minor Civil Division(s): | |
| County: | Erie |
| Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other): | |

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Name: | Apryle Schneeberger |
| Title: | Executive Director & Founder |
| Business Address: | 35 Tranquility Trail |
| State: | New York |
| Zip Code: | 14086 |
| Work Number: | 814-242-1746 |
| Cell Number: | 814-242-1746 |
| E-Mail Address: | connect@collaborativecenterforsocialinnovation.org |

PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Name: | Apryle Schneeberger |
| Title: | Executive Director & Founder |
| Organization / Firm: | The Collaborative Center for Social Innovation, Inc. |
| Business Address: | 35 Tranquility Trail |
| State: | New York |
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Our Place, Our Purpose: Public Art Project

Project Summary

This project will engage high school students, community members, emerging and resident artists, environmental groups, and community based organizations in the creation of public art murals along the Niagara River Greenway. **Three murals will provide a cohesive, interconnected set of interactive artwork - spanning Buffalo, Tonawanda, and Grand Island - designed and created by the community to highlight the beauty and importance of our ecological, cultural and historical landscape. Each mural will reflect the individuality of each community, while unifying design elements will provide the continuity that connects them as parts of a greater whole.** Through collaborative visioning and public art days, participants will design and paint murals using eco-friendly polytab fabric, which will be installed on these public spaces. The project will take place in three phases over the course of 5 years. **Uniquely, each mural will include interactive media elements that link to media and augmented reality immersive experiences to further celebrate, inspire and educate the viewers on the significance of our region. Like the murals themselves, the media will include storytelling elements such as community commentary and spotlights of the ongoing work of community based organizations.** The purpose is to foster a sense of purpose and belonging in the community by involving them in an impactful community project that connects them to local history, culture, and the environment. This aligns with the Collaborative Center's belief that when people feel a deep sense of purpose and belonging, they can transform our world. **By integrating these murals into the Greenway's scenic and recreational spaces, the project also fulfills the Greenway's vision of celebrating and connecting the area's unique natural and cultural resources while contributing to the region's vitality and economic opportunities.**

Advancing the Vision of the Niagara River Greenway Plan

Principles Alignment

The "Our Place, Our Purpose: Public Art Project" aligns with the Niagara River Greenway principles by fostering community engagement, celebrating the region's natural and cultural heritage, and highlighting connectivity within the Greenway. Through experiential learning and collaboration, the project empowers students and community members to co-create vibrant, sustainable art with professional artists that promotes environmental stewardship and revitalizes public spaces. The murals will reflect local history, ecology, and identity, while providing opportunities for social interaction, education, and shared experiences. By transforming underutilized spaces into meaningful cultural landmarks, the project supports the Greenway's vision of a world-class corridor that connects people to the unique resources of the Niagara River region.

- *Excellence:* The Collaborative Center specializes in experiential learning and community-driven solutions. Apryle Schneeberger has more than a decade of experience at the intersection of leadership, community engagement, and science education in WNY. The partnership with Jalen Law, accomplished muralist and visual artist with a deep understanding of Buffalo history and culture, will result in innovative world-class murals that ensure that the Greenway's globally significant resources are honored and celebrated through art that reflects its excellence.
- *Sustainability:* The murals, designed and created through community engagements that leverage experiential learning to educate as well as create, will serve as a point of connection between the community and the Greenway. Further, the interactive nature of the murals can serve to inspire and spark further stewardship and restoration efforts. Further, the design and creation of the mural itself will involve

sustainable practices and involve local artists, thus including ecological, physical and economical sustainability.

- *Accessibility:* The Collaborative Center's engagement with students, community organizations, and public promotes inclusivity, ensuring that people of all ages and abilities participate in the murals' creation. Public art days offer opportunities for the wider community - including underrepresented groups, youth, and seniors - to access, appreciate and contribute to the Greenway's artistic transformation.
- *Ecological Integrity:* By incorporating themes related to the local environment, wildlife, and landscapes, the design process will educate and immerse the public in their surroundings, and the murals themselves will serve as visual reminders of the importance of maintaining and restoring the area's ecological health, thus creating the sense of purpose and belonging.
- *Public Well-Being:* The murals and associated community events promote emotional and physical wellness, providing a platform for creative expression and offering the public a deeper connection to the environment and their community. The interactive nature of the murals will also serve as an ongoing engagement point to encourage the community members to appreciate the Shoreline Trail and Greenway often.
- *Connectivity:* The Collaborative Center's emphasis on building relationships within the community echoes the Greenway's focus on increasing connectivity. The mural locations at key entry points and along trails will visually link different parts of the Greenway, reinforcing the continuity of public spaces and natural habitats.
- *Restoration:* In using an experiential learning approach to community engagement, community members gain hands-on experience with environmental themes, fostering a deeper understanding of and connection to the Greenway's natural resources. By involving participants directly in the design and painting process, the project promotes long-term stewardship of the region. As they immerse themselves in nature and create art that highlights local ecosystems and restoration efforts, participants develop a sense of responsibility and advocacy for the ongoing preservation and renewal of the Greenway's ecological and cultural assets.
- *Authenticity:* The murals will reflect the local heritage, history, and culture, providing an authentic sense of place. By engaging local residents, students, and cultural organizations in the design process, the murals will capture the spirit of the community and the unique identity of the region.
- *Celebration:* The community engagement aspect, including public art days and collaborative design sessions, fosters social interaction and shared experiences. These events provide a platform for education, where participants and visitors can learn about the region's history and environmental significance through art. The hands-on nature of the project and interactive elements of the mural encourage a deeper connection to the Greenway, while building a sense of community pride and collective achievement, as local residents and visitors to the region come together to enjoy something lasting and meaningful.
- *Partnerships:* The Collaborative Center's ability to engage students, schools, artists, and local organizations directly supports the Greenway's principle of fostering partnerships. The collective effort in designing and painting the murals will strengthen community ties and integrate diverse perspectives into the project.
- *Community-Based:* This project is deeply rooted in community involvement, reflecting the voices, values, and creativity of local residents, students, and organizations. Through collaborative workshops and public art days, the design and execution of the murals will be shaped by the community itself, ensuring the artwork reflects local stories, culture, and aspirations. The project empowers residents to take an active role in enhancing their environment, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the Greenway. By directly

involving diverse groups, the project aligns with the preferences and needs of the community while contributing to the broader communal vision of the Niagara River Greenway.

Goals Alignment

The “Our Place, Our Purpose: Public Art Project” is intrinsically linked to the Niagara River Greenway’s goals. By improving access, making meaningful connections, protecting environmental systems, celebrating history and heritage, sparking revitalization, promoting sustainability, and extending Olmsted’s legacy, the project not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of the Greenway but also contributes to its long-term vision of creating a vibrant, connected, and sustainable community space. This alignment underscores the project’s potential to significantly impact both the local community and visitors, fostering a deeper appreciation and stewardship for the Niagara River Greenway.

- *Improve Access:* By placing murals at strategic points—such as the entrance to the Shoreline Trail in Black Rock Canal Park, behind Stinger's Marina, and on the pedestrian bridge over Beaver Island Expressway—the project improves visual landmarks, making it easier for visitors to visually navigate and access different sections of the Greenway. The experiential and community-driven design and creation of these murals further encourages diverse community members to engage with these spaces, fostering a sense of ownership and encouraging more frequent use of the Greenway’s resources.
- *Make Connections:* The collaborative design process and the strategic selection of sites builds stronger connections between different community groups and the Greenway, promoting continuity and a unified vision. The innovative interactive components of the mural will incorporate local stories and heritage to help locals and visitors alike to understand and appreciate the interconnected history and environment of the region, deepening their connection to the Greenway.
- *Protect and Restore Environmental Systems:* The experiential educational opportunities will partner with local environmental organizations to immerse the public in nature to be inspired by the ecological and cultural landscapes of the Greenway. Beyond the design and creation stages, the murals themselves, as social impact art, will raise public awareness about the importance of preserving and restoring the Greenway’s environmental system and foster a stewardship mindset among participants and visitors.
- *Celebrate History and Heritage:* The murals will reflect on and honor local culture, and specifically highlight the role of our ecological resources to wellbeing and forming a sense of place and purpose. Engaging community members in the mural creation process ensures that diverse stories and perspectives are represented, fostering a shared identity and pride in the Greenway.
- *Spark Revitalization and Renewal:* Strategically transforming underutilized walls and bridges into vibrant and innovative art spaces can rejuvenate these areas, making them attractive destinations for both residents and visitors. Involving local artists and organizations fosters a sense of investment in the community’s future, encouraging ongoing participation in Greenway projects and initiatives.
- *Promote Long Term Sustainability:* Using polytab fabric with anti-graffiti coating ensures that the murals are resilient and require minimal maintenance, promoting the long-term sustainability of the artwork. Inclusion of interactive components ensures that the murals remain a living part of the Greenway, with opportunities for future updates and enhancements.
- *Extend Olmsted’s Legacy:* By adding artistic elements to key locations, the project enriches the open spaces and parkways, aligning with Olmsted’s vision of interconnected green areas. Further, celebrating

the historical, environmental and cultural narratives through murals ensures that Olmsted's legacy of preserving and enhancing the Niagara River corridor is honored and extended for future generations.

Criteria Alignment

The "Our Place, Our Purpose: Public Art Project" aligns with Niagara River Greenway criteria through its clear benefits, consistency with principles, and focus areas. The project maximizes impact by leveraging Greenway funds and collaborations with existing programs and organizations, thus ensuring its financial sustainability. It adheres to Greenway principles by fostering community engagement, celebrating local culture, and enhancing environmental stewardship. By focusing on revitalizing key waterfront areas and urban centers, the project not only improves public spaces but also strengthens continuity within the Greenway, thereby contributing significantly to its vision and goals.

- *Consistency with Principles:* While the project aligns with multiple principles, its profound impact on *community-based* involvement and cultural *celebration* highlights its deep connection to the Greenway's vision and goals. By involving community members and students in the design and creation of murals that reflect the Greenway's importance and ecological importance, the project fosters a strong sense of community ownership and pride. Further, it celebrates local culture and environmental themes, enhancing stewardship and education.
- *Priority Status:* The project aligns closely with the Niagara River Greenway's priority status by directly contributing to several key elements. It enhances '*improved access*' by creating engaging public art installations that emotionally connect and draw people to the waterfront, thus increasing the use and enjoyment of these spaces. Additionally, it supports the '*development of an integrated trail and park system*' by integrating cohesive art into the landscape at three distinct locations, which can help to enhance the visual and experiential appeal - and continuity - of the Greenway's trail network. The project also supports the Restoration of Niagara River Ecosystem indirectly by fostering a greater understanding of and appreciation for the River's significance and encouraging stewardship through community engagement.
- *Focus Area:* The project is strategically located within the Greenway's core focus area, making it highly relevant to its goals. By placing murals at prominent locations - Black Rock Canal Park, Aqua Lane, and the Beaver Island Expressway pedestrian bridge - the project directly impacts high-visibility areas along the River. These locations are integral to enhancing the Greenway's core, thus creating a visible and lasting impact. Additionally, the project helps to build connections between different parts of the Greenway, reinforcing the focus area's role in establishing a strong, cohesive Greenway experience.
- *Environmental Soundness:* The project upholds environmental soundness by incorporating sustainable practices and minimizing negative impacts. The use of polytab fabric for murals ensures that materials are both eco-friendly and durable, reducing the need for frequent replacements, minimizing waste, and reducing graffiti. The project also aligns with the Greenway's focus on water-enhanced uses by integrating art into waterfront spaces, enhancing the aesthetic and encouraging interaction, without disrupting natural habitats.
- *Implementable:* The project is well-planned and feasible, with a clear implementation strategy. It includes a schedule for community engagement, mural creation, and installation phases for each mural. Budget estimates cover all aspects, including materials, artist fees, community engagement costs, and mural installments. The project team has identified necessary permits and approvals, and will continue open

lines of communication with the corresponding agencies through each phase of the project. Additionally, public support is evident through letters of endorsement from community organizations and local officials.

- *Economic Viability:* The project demonstrates strong economic viability through a well-considered financial plan. The project budget accounts for initial expenses and ongoing maintenance, with a focus on cost-effective, durable materials. It leverages community involvement to reduce labor costs, involves a workforce development component, and seeks funding from multiple sources, including grants and collaborations. This approach ensures sustainability and minimizes financial burden on municipal resources while enhancing the Greenway’s appeal and potentially increasing local economic activity through increased foot traffic and community engagement.
- *Local Sponsor or Partner:* The Collaborative Center for Social Innovation specializes in programming that requires multiple agencies collaborating to complete complex social impact projects and is well positioned to engage and connect the necessary parties to complete this project.
- *Matching Funds/Leveraging:* The project effectively leverages multiple funding sources to maximize impact while consolidating costs by incorporating aspects of the project into the Collaborative Center’s existing summer intensives and afterschool programming that builds learning agency and leadership through environmental-based experiential learning. Further, by leveraging strategic partnerships - such as with artists in residence at the Hunt Art Gallery and educational environmental excursions with organizations such as Grand Island Nature Alliance and Earth Spirit Educational Services - we are able to further consolidate costs without compromising impact. The strategic use of Greenway funds, combined with additional private and public support, ensures that the project can cover both its start-up and ongoing costs, making it financially sustainable and highly impactful.
- *Consideration of Other Planning Efforts:* Multiple organizations have been engaged to participate in this project both from a financial, workforce development and programmatic perspective.
- *Clear Benefits:* The "Our Place, Our Purpose: Public Art Project" offers clear and significant benefits to the Niagara River Greenway. By transforming highly visible locations into vibrant public art spaces, the project enhances the aesthetic and recreational value of the area, draws visitors, and fosters community engagement. By spotlighting community individuality while also providing a continuum that connects them together, the murals will create a lasting cultural impact, improve local pride, and support environmental stewardship through educational themes and artistic expression.

Budget

| Element | Description | Phase I | Phase II | Phase III | Totals for All Phases |
|------------------|---|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Planning /Design | | | | | |
| | Academic Year Program | \$17,000 | \$74,000 | \$88,000 | \$179,000 |
| | Summer Intensive (includes 8 Community Engagements) | \$48,800 | \$55,090 | \$13,600 | \$117,490 |
| | Other Community Engagements | \$2,000 | \$15,000 | \$23,000 | \$40,000 |
| Construction | | | | | |
| | Surface Preparation | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Mural (includes community paint engagements) | \$38,520 | \$99,894 | \$99,494 | \$237,908 |
| | Visual Documentary | \$14,000 | \$28,000 | \$28,000 | \$70,000 |
| | Other Community Engagement | \$5,200 | | | \$5,200 |
| | Installation | \$16,950 | \$45,050 | \$114,800 | \$176,800 |
| Acquisition | | - | - | - | \$0 |
| Administration | | \$21,821 | \$48,155 | \$55,034 | \$125,010 |
| Operation and Maintenance / Year | | \$3,000 | \$4,000 | \$6,000 | \$13,000 |
| TOTAL PROJECT COST | | \$167,291 | \$369,189 | \$427,928 | \$964,408 |
| Other Funds | | | | | |
| | In-Kind | \$3,000 | \$17,500 | \$17,500 | \$38,000 |
| | Allocated | \$33,000 | \$45,000 | \$15,000 | \$93,000 |
| | Additional Resources | | \$59,000 | \$68,000 | \$127,000 |
| TOTAL OTHER FUNDS | | \$36,000 | \$121,500 | \$100,500 | \$258,000 |
| Funds Requested | | \$131,291 | \$247,689 | \$327,428 | \$706,408 |
| Percentage of Project | | 78.48% | 67.09% | 76.51% | 73.25% |

We have divided the project into three phases. Importantly, the following phases advance from South to North and overlap in the timeline of implementation. They are:

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|--|
| 2025-2026 | Phase I | Black Rock Canal Park Shoreline Trail Access Point (Set of 2 Murals) |
| 2026-2028 | Phase II | Aqua Lane Shoreline Trail Mural |
| 2027-2029 | Phase III | Beaver Island Parkway Shoreline Trail Pedestrian Bridge Mural |

Phase I leverages programming for high school students during the 2024-2025 academic year in which a group of high school students will engage in experiential learning to better understand the ecological and cultural landscape of the Greenway. This will include outings to local parks and waterfront landmarks, as well as a study of public art styles and interpretations. This planning stage programming is partially funded through a contract with the Buffalo Public Schools and through in kind services of The Collaborative Center.

The result of that programming will directly inform the summer 2025 programming in which a cohort of high school students will work with professional artists and educators to design the visuals for the Black Rock Canal Park Shoreline Trail Access point. This will include a minimum of 8 community engagements in ecological and cultural locations, such as Beaver Island State Park, Silo City and Freedom Park. The community engagements each have hands-on educational and creative components. This design stage and summer intensive is based on 140 hours of engagement by each youth participant. The design stage costs are offset by allocated funds from the Collaborative Center’s summer programming budget. Those funds are sourced from private foundations.

Leading into the 2025-2026 academic year, the students and artists will begin the construction stage in which the polytab is painted. This will also include a minimum of 5 community paint events in which the public will be invited to co-create the mural and also learn more about the project and the Greenway. Community paint days can occur in collaboration with local organizations and events.

The final installation will incorporate interactives that spotlight various community members and organizations involved in the project to engage all who view the mural and thereby rekindle the relationship between humanity and nature. Target installation completion date is Earth Day on Wednesday, April 22, 2026; however, depending on the weather, this date could shift into early summer 2026.

Phase II again leverages summer programming typically offered by the Collaborative Center, however, given the scale of this mural, the students will initially be paired with two additional resident artists, overseen by lead artist Jalen Law, as they immerse in ecological, historical, and cultural sites with the goal of ideating artistic elements that should be incorporated. This will again include a minimum of 8 community engagements, and could include sites such as Buffalo Maritime Center, Niagara Falls State Park, and Canalside.

Once the design elements are determined, and entering Fall of 2026, the student team will have access to six resident artists, to fully create the design and print the design outline on polytab fabric. The expanded capacity will not only serve as a workforce development opportunity for artists, but also as a leadership opportunity for our youth. This process will also involve community engagements to continue the iterative process and continuity of community voice.

The construction phase will begin in the summer of 2027, again leveraging the Collaborative Center summer programming and incorporating the opportunity for six resident artists to paint the fabric. These six artists will ideally be a combination of returning artists and artists new to the project. Jalen Law will continue as the lead artist and facilitator throughout the project. During this phase, there will again be community paint events - a minimum of 4 throughout the summer - in which participants can paint directly on the polytab fabric. Additionally, we will continue the ecological focused community engagements with an emphasis on Grand Island this summer as a part of Phase III overlap.

Additional funds for this phase of the project will include \$45,000 allocated by the Collaborative Center's summer programming budget as well as \$2,000 of in-kind support to maintain and update the digital assets connected to the interactive nature of the mural. Get Fokus'd Productions will also provide in kind support as part of its Give Back program. Support for the resident artists, including offsetting their safety certifications to work at height, will be primarily pursued through a combination of grants from governmental agencies and local arts foundations, as well as a partnership with Hunt Art Gallery. Given the quantity of materials and space needed to complete this mural, we will also seek in-kind support for a location in the Brisbane Building due to proximity to Hunt Art Gallery.

The final installation will incorporate interactives that spotlight various community members and organizations involved in the project to engage all who view the mural, thereby rekindling the relationship between humanity and nature. Target installation completion date is Earth Day on Saturday, April 22, 2028; however, depending on the weather, this date could shift into early summer 2028.

Phase III takes a somewhat different engagement approach to the planning stage in that it does not include a school-based program, but rather leverages more immersive outings with organizations such as Earth Spirit Educational Services and Grand Island Nature Alliance. The outings would include such sites as Beaver Island State Park, Buckhorn Island State Park, and Earl W. Brydges Artpark State Park. And additional programming could include activities such as snowshoeing, birdwatching, maple sugaring, and explorations of wetland habitats. We anticipate a minimum of 12 immersive outings that include ecological education as well as creative components on how to translate that learning to social impact art for the pedestrian bridge. In addition to these longer immersives, we will also hold community engagements along the highly active Shoreline Trail and mini-sessions with local schools and youth organizations. These activities will be led in part by the youth and resident artists who are engaged in Phase II, again to inform the continuity of the designs along the three locations of the Shoreline Trail from Buffalo to Tonawanda to Grand Island.

It is anticipated that the team of youth and resident artists, led by Jalen Law, will begin to combine the elements from the planning stage into a design outline that will be ready to be printed on polytab in May 2028. To ensure community voice is heard and respected, at least three community engagements will provide opportunities for share outs, feedback, and iteration. These engagements will also allow for participants to paint and create images for incorporation into the final design.

The construction phase will leverage youth in summer programming and will provide for community paint events. The scale of the project also lends itself to the opportunity to incorporate 6 artists in the painting process. This stage will incorporate eight community engagement opportunities with local organizations and summer events.

The final polytab images will be printed on vinyl to adhere to the bridge, while the original polytab paintings will be able to be displayed as an exhibit throughout the region, further giving ownership of the work to the community.

Additional funds for this phase of the project will include \$15,000 allocated by the Collaborative Center's summer programming budget as well as \$2,000 of in-kind support to maintain and update the digital assets connected to the interactive nature of the mural. Get Fokus'd Productions will also provide in kind support as part of its Give Back program. Support for the resident artists, including offsetting their safety certifications to work at height, will be primarily pursued through a combination of grants from governmental agencies and local arts foundations, as well as a partnership with Hunt Art Gallery. Given the quantity of materials and space needed to complete this mural, we will also seek in-kind support for a location in the Brisbane Building due to proximity to Hunt Art Gallery.

The final installation of this proposal will incorporate interactives that spotlight various community members and organizations involved in the project to engage all who view the mural, thereby rekindling the relationship between humanity and nature. Strokes Painting will install this mural given the scope and scale - more than 1200 linear feet and crossing a four-lane expressway. Target installation completion date is Earth Day on Sunday, April 22, 2029; however, depending on the weather, this date could shift into late summer 2029.

Proposed Site Locations

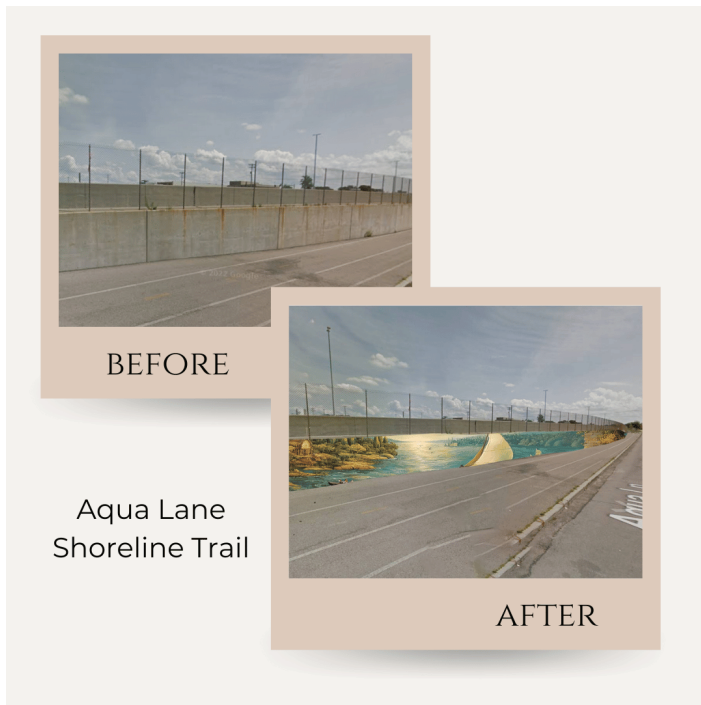


** Images are examples to show which areas will be part of the mural installations.

**Final designs will be submitted for approval to the appropriate agencies for each site.

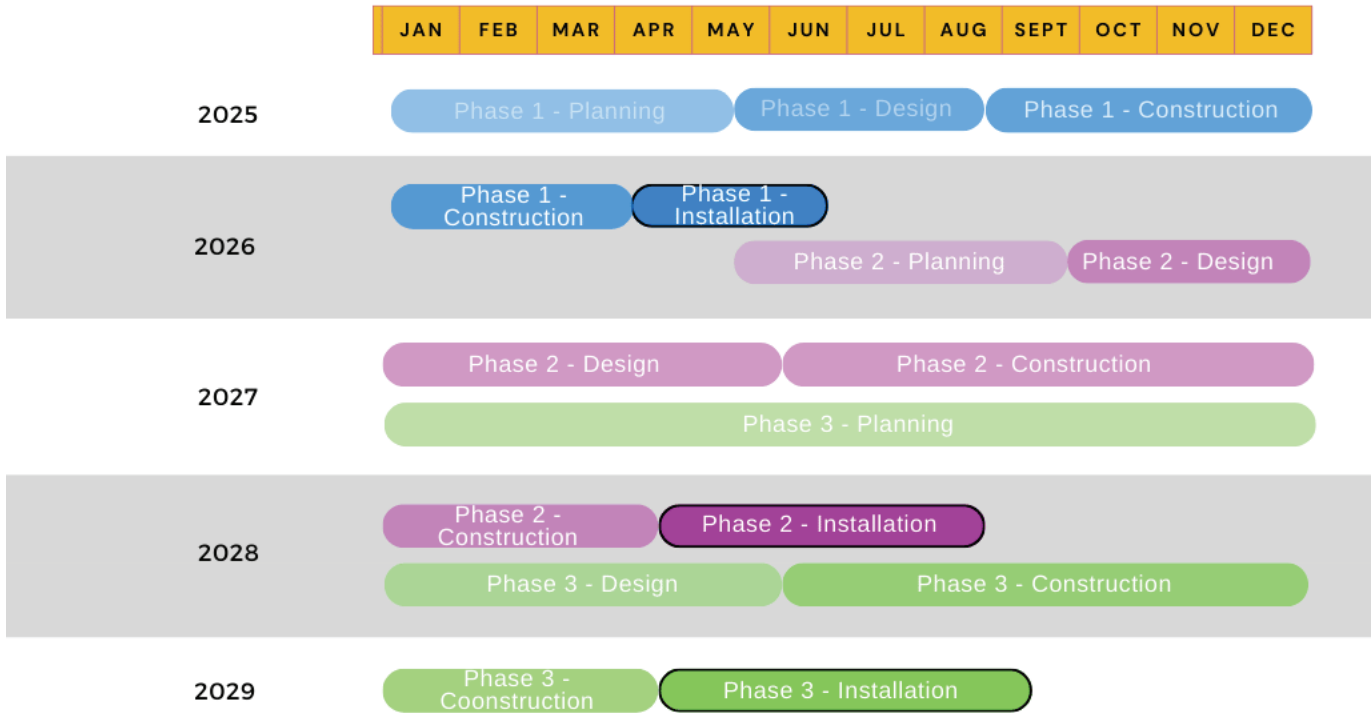
** An example interactive component would be a code to scan that employs augmented reality to animate the mural.

**Another example interactive component would be a code to scan that would open media that highlights the community engagement pieces that went into creating that portion of the mural, why an element was chosen (perhaps a lake sturgeon), and community organizations who are working in that space. In this example, featuring the sturgeon could raise awareness about the importance of protecting aquatic biodiversity in the river.



Proposed Timeline

PROPOSAL TIMELINE “OUR PLACE, OUR PURPOSE: PUBLIC ART PROJECT”



- Black Rock Canal Park, Shoreline Trail Access Point, Buffalo
- Aqua Lane, Shoreline Trail, Tonawanda
- Pedestrian Bridge, Beaver Island Parkway, Grand Island



Gregory Stevens

Executive Director

Niagara River Greenway

103 Commission House Rd.

Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for your proposal to create three large-scale murals for the Niagara River Greenway. Get Fokus'd Productions is dedicated to collaborating with creatives to foster community engagement through capturing human first stories through digital arts, we believe this project aligns perfectly with our mission.

The concept of involving the public in the design and creation of these murals is truly inspiring. It not only promotes artistic expression but also strengthens community bonds. The interactive elements linking the final pieces to online visuals of community members will enhance the experience and foster a sense of belonging.

We recognize that this project is ambitious and will unfold over a 4-5 year timeline. However, we are excited about the potential it holds to transform the Niagara River Greenway into a vibrant canvas that reflects the diverse voices of the community.

Thank you for considering us as a partner in this community based project. We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate in developing stories through digital media art in order to highlight the process of bringing these murals to life.

Fokus'd Forward,**Aitina Fareed-Cooke****Founder, Get Fokus'd Productions**



9/12/2024

To whom it may concern,

We at Earth Spirit are extremely pleased and very excited to write this letter supporting the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation's initiative to educate, connect, and empower the community through the design and creation of a continuum of public art murals along key areas of the Shoreline Trail. The installations will highlight the distinct ecological and cultural features of each site while connecting them together to create a fuller understanding and appreciation of the Niagara River corridor.

Earth Spirit is excited to be a part of this endeavor as an educational partner providing high quality, hands-on experiences for the participating youth and adults to form the foundation for understanding the natural processes of the world around them. As an organization focused on connecting individuals with the natural world in safe, educational, and enjoyable ways, we value other organizations, such as the Collaborative Center, who have similar goals. Exposure to the wide variety of unique ecosystems is key to connection and understanding. Earth Spirit will engage groups of students throughout the summer program through sessions including birding, wetland walks, forest ecology, and more. These sessions, along with public engagement outings, will serve to build a foundational understanding of the key habitats, species, people, and places along the Niagara River corridor, which will connect nicely with the proposed mural installments.

Earth Spirit Educational Service, Inc. has been around for over 40 years and has been a 501c3 not-for-profit educational organization for the vast majority of that time. Our education staff are professionally trained and have a passion for sharing the many lessons the natural world has to offer. We work with all age groups throughout the Western New York region and are well equipped to serve our role as education partners for this initiative.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with the Collaborative Center and the other partner organizations involved in the "Our Place, Our Purpose: Public Art Project" initiative and look forward to the possibilities!

With pleasure,

Jonathan Roth

Program Coordinator/Lead Environmental Educator
Earth Spirit Educational Services, Inc.



September 27, 2024

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

I am writing in support of the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation's "Our Place, Our Purpose" proposal, an extensive public arts project along the Shoreline Trail that will engage the community in creating and immersing in our ecological, cultural, and historical resources. Including interactive components, such as high-quality story-telling media by Get Fokus'd Productions, will further give voice to the community members and provide a continuous thread that ties the Greenway communities together.

During the summers of 2023 and 2024, Villa Maria College hosted CCSI's summer program, where young people explored health equity, urban design, and eco-restoration. As part of Villa's partnership with CCSI, students in the program were able to earn three college credits in Sociology 102: Contemporary Social Problems, Community Health 101: Introduction to Public & Community Health, or Biology 161: Ecology. We are looking forward to having the CCSI program back on our campus.

The work this organization does truly makes an impact on the young people involved, and I believe this project has the potential to make a real impact on our community as well.

I hope you will look favorably on their proposal for support.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Rivera".

Ann Rivera, Ph.D. (she/her/hers)
Provost
Villa Maria College
240 Pine Ridge Road
Buffalo, NY 14225
716-961-1800 | arivera@villa.edu



Villa Maria College is a Felician sponsored institution

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

On behalf of Hunt residencies, I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation's public art mural project, "Our Place, Our Purpose", along the Niagara River Greenway. We are excited to partner with the Collaborative Center and lead artist Jalen Law to contribute to this visionary project, which will transform public spaces and engage the community in a meaningful and creative way.

As part of this collaboration, Hunt residencies can align its Emerging Artist Program to support the design and creation of the murals. Through this program, we will empower emerging local artists by offering mentorship, guidance, and opportunities to work on large-scale public art. This partnership will further expand the educational growth and workforce development components of the project, offering young artists real-world experience and skill-building as they contribute to a public art installation that reflects the community's values and culture.

In addition to our programmatic support, Hunt residencies will collaborate with the Collaborative Center on grant support and fundraising initiatives to ensure financial sustainability for the emerging artists involved in the project. By working together to secure resources, we will be able to maximize the impact of this initiative and ensure that these murals serve as lasting representations of creativity, community engagement, and artistic expression along the Niagara River Greenway.

We believe this project has the potential to not only enhance the visual landscape of the area but also provide invaluable educational and professional growth opportunities for young artists. We are proud to be a part of this effort and look forward to working closely with Jalen Law and the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation to bring this vision to life.

Thank you for considering our support of this important initiative. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christina Buscarino
Gallery Director
The C. Stuart and Jane H. Hunt Art Gallery
716-480-6605
christina.buscarino@huntartgallery.com

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

On behalf of Riverside Academy High School PS# 208, I am writing to express our strong support for the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation's public art proposal, "Our Place, Our Purpose", along the Niagara River Greenway. We are excited to collaborate with the Collaborative Center and Jalen Law to offer workshops as part of our Saturday Academies, where students and community members will have the opportunity to engage in the design and creation of murals for Black Rock Canal Park and Aqua Lane.

This project aligns with our mission to provide equitable opportunities for Buffalo's students and families, and we believe it will offer participants an invaluable hands-on experience in art and community engagement. Through these workshops, students and their families will not only develop artistic skills but also learn the importance of collaboration, environmental responsibility, and the role of public art in creating a sense of place and belonging.

By integrating the mural design and creation process into our Saturday Academies, we will be able to expand access to meaningful educational experiences that foster creativity and self-expression. We are confident that this initiative will positively impact our families, empowering them to take pride in their community and contribute to the beautification of the Niagara River Greenway.

Riverside Academy High School is proud to support this project, and we look forward to seeing the lasting impact it will have on our students and the greater Buffalo community.

Thank you for considering our support of this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Maria Conrad, Principal



Keira Grant, Community Schools Navigator



HUTCHINSON CENTRAL TECHNICAL H.S.

www.HCTHS.com



Daniel Zack
PRINCIPAL

SOLOMON JACKSON
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

DENNIS WRIGHT
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

NATAISIA JOHNSON
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

September, 26, 2024

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

I am writing to express our support for the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation's public mural project "Our Place, Our Purpose", along the Niagara River Greenway. As the principal of Hutchinson Central Technical High School (Hutch Tech #304), I am excited about the opportunity for our students to be actively involved in designing and creating the murals as part of this community-based initiative.

This project represents a unique chance for our students to apply their creativity and knowledge of the social determinants of health and the environment in a real-world setting, where they can contribute to a large-scale public artwork that reflects the identity and history of the Niagara River region and also sparks social action. By participating in the mural creation, Hutch Tech students will not only enhance their understanding of our ecological landscape, but they will also gain experience in community engagement, teamwork, and problem-solving—skills that are essential for their academic and professional development.

Thank you for considering our support of this important initiative. We are excited to see the lasting impact this project will have on both our students and the wider community.

Sincerely,

Daniel D. Zack
Principal



Cardinal O'Hara

HIGH SCHOOL

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation's "Our Place, Our Purpose" interactive mural project along the Shoreline Trail, specifically for the Aqua Lane mural in Tonawanda. At Cardinal O'Hara High School, we are thrilled to have our students participate in the design and creation of this mural, which will be a valuable opportunity for them to engage in a meaningful, community-centered social impact experience.

This project provides our students with the chance to contribute to a significant public art installation, working alongside professional artists and community members to reflect on the unique ecological resources and heritage of the Tonawanda region. Through their involvement, our students will develop not only their artistic talents but also critical skills such as collaboration, communication, research, and leadership, which are key to their personal and academic growth.

At Cardinal O'Hara, we prioritize fostering well-rounded individuals who are engaged citizens, and this project aligns perfectly with our commitment to service and experiential learning. By participating in the Aqua Lane mural, our students will have the opportunity to see firsthand how art can serve as a powerful tool for community building, environmental action, and cultural expression.

We are excited to partner with the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation and lead artist Jalen Law on this important initiative, and we look forward to the lasting impact it will have on our students and the broader community. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration of our support.

Sincerely,

Joleen M. Dimitroff
Principal

TOGETHER, WE ARE DEFENDERS OF POTENTIAL

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

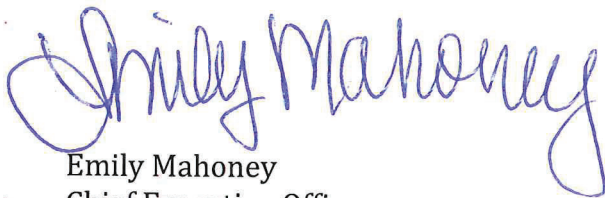
Dear Mr. Stevens,

On behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Erie, Niagara & the Southern Tier/Be-A-Friend Program, Inc., I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the "Our Place, Our Purpose" Public Art Project. As an organization dedicated to fostering meaningful mentoring relationships that empower young people to achieve their full potential, we are thrilled about the opportunity for our Littles, Bigs, and their families to be involved in this important community initiative.

The project's focus on ecological, historical, and cultural identity, along with its use of public art to engage the community, aligns perfectly with our mission of providing enriching experiences for youth. By involving our Littles in the design and creation of these murals, they will not only gain artistic skills but also a deeper understanding of the importance of the Niagara River corridor to the environment and local history. This experiential learning opportunity will encourage a sense of pride and belonging, helping them connect more deeply with their community.

We are committed to supporting this project by encouraging our mentors and mentees to participate in workshops and community painting days. We believe this initiative will foster collaboration, creativity, and connection among diverse groups while providing a lasting contribution to our public spaces.

Sincerely,



Emily Mahoney
Chief Executive Officer



Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

On behalf of Home Beneath Our Feet, a nature-focused nonprofit that seeds the development of children, youth, and adults through physical, financial, and personal development to improve quality of life in our community, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the Collaborative Center's public art mural proposal, "Our Place, Our Purpose". We are thrilled about the opportunity to collaborate on this meaningful project that will unite local students, families, and residents in the beautification of public spaces along the Niagara River.

Home Beneath Our Feet is proud to contribute to this initiative by actively engaging the youth and families we serve in the design and creation of the murals at Black Rock Canal Park and Aqua Lane. Our organization has built strong, trusting relationships with students across the region, including in the Black Rock and Tonawanda communities, and we are committed to empowering them to take leadership roles in this project. By involving students and families in every stage of the mural process, from brainstorming themes to painting the final artwork, we believe we can foster a deeper sense of belonging and pride in their neighborhoods.

Through our programs, we have seen firsthand how public projects can strengthen community bonds and encourage creative expression. This interactive mural initiative will not only transform walls into vibrant, visual stories but will also serve as a platform for students and families to reflect on and celebrate the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Niagara River Greenway. By incorporating local history and ecology into the mural designs, the project will connect participants to the environment in new and exciting ways, deepening their appreciation for the natural world.

This initiative aligns with our mission to leverage community engagement to foster personal and social transformation. We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with other community organizations and artists. Further, we are confident that together, we can create murals that will beautify our public spaces and serve as a lasting testament to the creativity and resilience of our community.

Sincerely,

Dwight Lowe, Executive Director

345 Broadway Street, Suite 104, Buffalo, NY 14204

Web www.hbof.org

E-mail dlowe@hbof.org



September 30, 2024

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

On behalf of the Buffalo Maritime Center, I am writing to express our strong support for the "Our Place, Our Purpose" Public Art Project submitted by the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation and Jalen Law. As an organization committed to connecting Buffalo's youth with the ecological, historical, and cultural identity of our waterways, we are excited about the opportunity to collaborate on this important initiative.

Our experience with the long-term impact of experiential learning aligns with the project's methodology. Students engaging in the design, and creation of the murals across the three sites will instill lifelong lessons. We are particularly excited to bring more public art to our Riverside neighborhood at the Shoreline Trail Aqua Lane and Black Rock Canal Park locations. Through hands-on activities, we can guide participants in exploring the ecological significance of the Niagara River and Lake Erie, while highlighting the rich maritime heritage that defines our waterways. Introducing the aquatic plants and animals that live in our local waters and their connection to the traditional watercraft and their construction will provide a fantastic context to create.

This project will foster a deeper sense of cultural pride and environmental stewardship among our youth, who will see their contributions reflected in these vibrant public spaces. This is an opportunity to further connect Western New Yorkers to our local waterways and reinforce how interdependent they are. Furthermore, the interactive nature of the artworks will exponentially increase the educational impact for decades to come.

We very much recommend this exciting proposal from the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation and Jalen Law. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Trzeciak", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Brian Trzeciak
Executive Director
brian@buffalomaritimecenter.org
646.584.9767



9/27/2024

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

The Collaborative Center for Social Innovation, Inc. is submitting a project proposal entitled, "Our Place, Our Purpose" to the Niagara River Greenway Commission to engage communities around the Niagara River Corridor in an interactive and educational experience that results in multiple stunning public art pieces along the Shoreline Trail. This experience will bring people from all over to view the animated and thought-provoking murals, which will instill a sense of pride in their community.

Our grassroots organization has tremendous pride in our community and sees a big need to fix an ongoing rust and graffiti problem very close to one of our elementary schools. The pedestrian bridge that crosses the South Parkway at Love Road, connects students and other neighbors to the Shoreline Trail, the Kaegebein Elementary School and to many neighborhoods. The South Parkway, or what Grand Islanders often refer to as the Beaver Island Parkway is the main road leading into Beaver Island State Park, which has many off island visitors, including seasonal tourists. We feel this bridge is a prime location for a beautiful public art piece that will welcome, students, neighbors and off island visitors to our beautiful island. It could potentially serve as a way to bring awareness about the vast ecological assets found on Grand Island.

The Collaborative Center for Social Innovation along with the lead public artist, Jalen Law, uses place based learning to instill a sense of purpose and belonging in youth and community members at large. The process they use that brings community members out into important cultural, historic and natural settings and focus their attention on what they are experiencing aligns directly with the Niagara River Greenway's mission. We are excited to work with the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation in coming up with a design concept for the mural and will be happy to participate in any community engagement sessions they hold.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sonia Merkel".

Sonia Merkel
Committee Chair
Grand Island Nature Alliance

9/27/2024

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

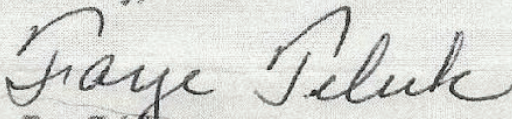
Dear Mr. Stevens,

The Collaborative Center for Social Innovation, Inc. is submitting a project proposal entitled, "Our Place, Our Purpose" to the Niagara River Greenway Commission to engage communities around the Niagara River Corridor in an interactive and educational experience that results in multiple stunning public art pieces along the Shoreline Trail. This experience will bring people from all over to view the animated and thought-provoking murals, which will instill a sense of pride in their community.

Our Rotary Club has identified a problem of rust and graffiti very close to one of our elementary schools. The pedestrian bridge that crosses the South Parkway at Love Road, connects students and other neighbors to the Shoreline Trail, the Kaegehein Elementary School and to many neighborhoods. Our Rotary club has adopted this section of the Shoreline Trail and we do large clean ups around here twice a year. We recruit students to help us and are frankly embarrassed by the inappropriate graffiti seen on this bridge. We feel that young children shouldn't have to be subjected to this every day. We believe a bright and cheery public art mural on this bridge would put a smile on the children's and community members faces.

The Collaborative Center for Social Innovation along with the lead public artist, Jalen Law, uses place based learning to instill a sense of purpose and belonging in youth and community members at large. The process they use that brings community members out into important cultural, historic and natural settings and focus their attention on what they are experiencing aligns directly with the Niagara River Greenway's mission. We are excited to work with the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation in coming up with a design concept for the mural and will be happy to participate in any community engagement sessions they hold.

Sincerely,



Faye Teluk
fteluk@gmail.com
President
Grand Island Rotary Club



September 16, 2024

Gregory Stevens
Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway
103 Commission House Rd.
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Mr. Stevens,

I am writing in support of the Collaborative Center for Social Innovation's "Our Place, Our Purpose" proposal to engage the community in designing and creating large scale interactive murals that will showcase the rich environmental and cultural assets of the Greenway.

Specifically regarding the concept for the Shoreline Trail Pedestrian Bridge on Beaver Island Parkway in Grand Island, Strokes Painting and Contracting is excited by the opportunity to engage in the installation process. Our company, a certified woman owned business that has received recognitions Outstanding Woman Owned Business in WNY and University at Buffalo's Fast 46 entrepreneurs, is knowledgeable and experienced in these types of installations, and we would further be able to coordinate with The Collaborative Center for Social Innovation and the Department of Transportation to ensure a successful installation.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions and we look forward to seeing how these interactive murals connect our communities along the Shoreline Trail.

Sincerely,

Danielle Bickel

Danielle Bickel

Owner and CEO

Strokes Painting and Contracting

716-491-1550